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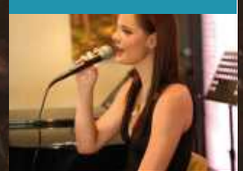
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FARES PER PERSON			VGR160522
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	£1,749	£1,574	£175
2 Bed Outside	£2,099	£1889	£210
Balcony Cabin	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	-


Venice, Italy

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- UNESCO-listed Campiello in Corfu Town

FARES PER PERSON			VGR160913
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	£1,969	£1,772	£197
2 Bed Outside	£2,359	£2,123	£236
Balcony Cabin	£3,789	£3,410	£379


Victoria Peak, Hong Kong

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PHILIPPINES | HONG KONG

18TH JANUARY 2017

16-DAY CRUISE FROM

£2,213

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admire the unique flora and fauna of UNESCO-listed Mount Kinabalu National Park
- Get up close to the orangutans of Sepilok Sanctuary
- Wonder at the majestic Chocolate Hills of Bohol
- Explore Cebu, the Philippines' oldest colonial city

FARES PER PERSON			VGR170118
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	£2,459	£2,213	£246
2 Bed Outside	£2,949	£2,654	£295
Balcony Cabin	£4,399	£3,959	£440


Bagan Temples, Myanmar

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SINGAPORE | MALAYSIA | MYANMAR
SRI LANKA

17TH FEBRUARY 2017

15-DAY CRUISE FROM

£1,852

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admire some of the world's most stunning modern architecture in Kuala Lumpur
- Discover Langkawi's rural landscapes of rice paddy fields and plantations
- Enjoy a two-night stay in Yangon with the opportunity to visit the beautiful Bagan Temples

FARES PER PERSON			VGR170217
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	£2,179	£1,852	£327
2 Bed Outside	£2,619	£2,226	£393
Balcony Cabin	£3,919	£3,331	£588


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MAURITIUS

3RD MARCH 2017

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£2,897

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the island capital of the Maldives, Male
- Discover the flora and fauna of uninhabited Kuda Bandos
- Enjoy the beauty of the Seychelles and slip into the relaxed lifestyle of the islanders

FARES PER PERSON			VGR170303
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	-
2 Bed Outside	£3,219	£2,897	£332
Balcony Cabin	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	-


Walvis Bay, Namibia

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CANARY ISLANDS

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FARES PER PERSON			VGR170401
CABIN TYPE	BROCHURE FARE	OFFER FARE	SAVING
2 Bed Inside	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	-
2 Bed Outside	£2,659	£2,260	£399
Balcony Cabin	£3,719	£3,161	£558

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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2016

EDITOR'S LETTER



I love this time of year – forget Christmas shopping, for me there's nothing better than snuggling up on the sofa and planning your next cruise adventure. And this issue is packed with ideas to inspire you, including the hottest new ships, itineraries and destinations for the year ahead (page 27).

Somewhere you may want to consider going is Hawaii, one of my favourite destinations in the world. On page 44 you can discover what our Contributing Editor Sara Macefield thought when she took a cruise around the islands.

Thank you to the thousands (and thousands) of you who voted in the Cruise Awards 2015 – you can see all the winners on page 51 (and there were a few surprises this year). A huge congratulations to all those who won and were highly commended. On page 91 you can read about cruises that get you closer to some of the world's rarest wildlife, and on page 22 we have delectable cake recipes from the delicious Eric Lanlard.

If you're looking for more advice for planning your cruise holiday, come and see us at the Telegraph Cruise Show (details on page 67) and Destinations (turn to page 83).

Also in this issue we're giving you the chance to win a fantastic cruise for two with Princess Cruises (details on page 88) and £1,000 of luxury luggage from specialists caseluggage.com (page 20).

Enjoy,



Liz Jarvis, Editor

liz.jarvis@cruise-international.com







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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2016

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Jubilee House, 2 Jubilee Place
London SW3 3TQ Tel: 020 7349 3700
info@cruise-international.com
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EDITORIAL
EDITOR Liz Jarvis
SENIOR ART EDITOR Rhian Colley
ASSISTANT EDITOR Luke Till
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Sara Macefield, Julie Peasgood

ONLINE
DIGITAL PRODUCT MANAGER Oliver Morley-Norris

ADVERTISING
GROUP ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER Lyndal Beeton

PUBLISHING
PUBLISHER Caroline Scott
MARKETING MANAGER William Delmont
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR Vicki Gavin
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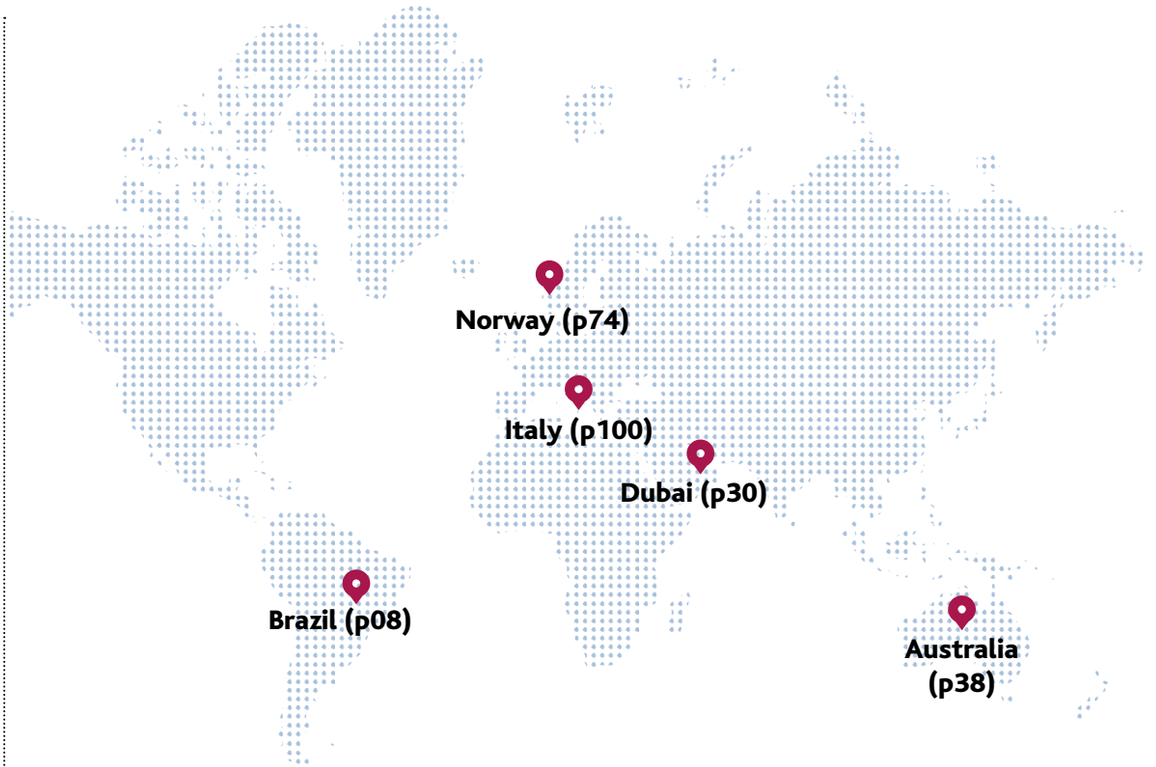
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PSA CRUISE JOURNALISM AWARDS 2013 WINNER

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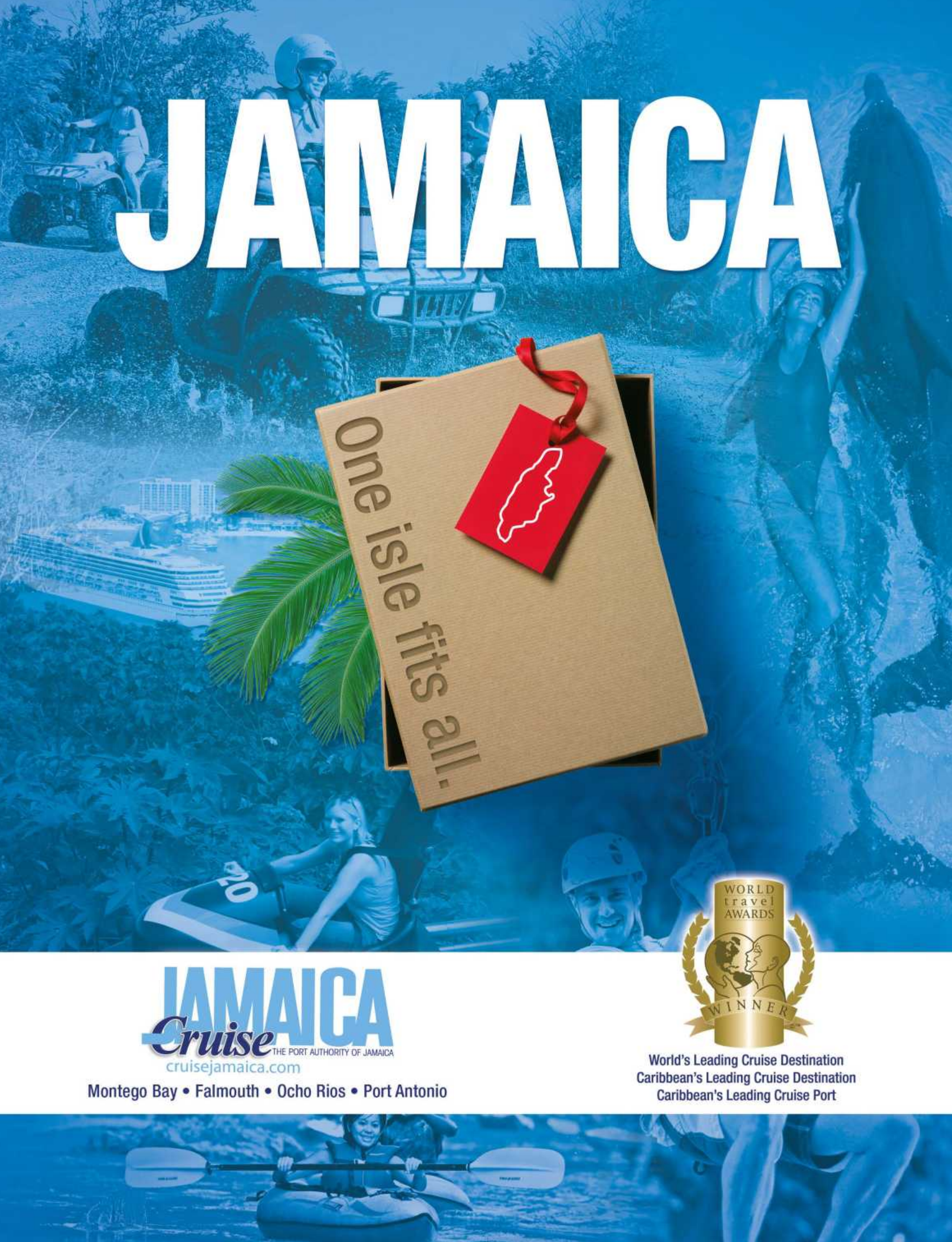
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RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Famous for its beaches, flamboyant annual Carnival and spectacular landscape fusing mountains, skyscrapers and sea, Brazil's second largest city is one of the world's most vibrant and colourful. Iconic statue Christ the Redeemer dominates the skyline from the peak of Corcovado, watching over Rio's bustling districts below, and with the majestic Sugarloaf Mountain standing proudly at one end, Copacabana's golden coastline plays host to millions of revellers every New Year's Eve. Next year, Rio will host the 2016 Summer Olympics across four regions of the city – Barra, Deodoro, Maracanã and Copacabana – giving you the perfect reason to visit this extraordinary South American metropolis.

>>Turn to page 27 to read about the best cruises for 2016



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CRUISE News

SHIPS • EVENTS • DESTINATIONS

RSSC UNVEILS 2016/17 WINTER COLLECTION

Luxury cruise line Regent Seven Seas Cruises has released its 2016/17 Winter Collection of itineraries.

Featured destinations include the ancient lands of Asia and Africa, where on 11 select sailings guests can further enrich their cruise holiday with a free, three-night land adventure in exotic destinations including Cape Town, Angkor Wat, Hong Kong and Beijing in China.

The free land programme is available in all suite categories and includes sightseeing adventures such as an African safari and a visit to the 2,000-year old Great Wall in China.

The Regent Seven Seas Cruises fleet will also visit iconic cities in South America and the Mediterranean, and explore the natural wonders of the Caribbean and the South Pacific, including four ports of call never before visited by Regent Seven Seas Cruises: Gisborne, New Zealand; Harvest Caye, Belize; Mazatlan, Mexico; and a hidden gem featuring a cobblestoned pueblo viejo (old town) and the region's most alluring beaches.



In total, Regent Seven Seas Cruises will offer 56 sailings on its award-winning four vessel fleet, ranging from seven to 128 nights in length. For more details, visit rssc.co.uk.



THE CRUISE AWARDS ON CHANNEL 4'S COUNTDOWN

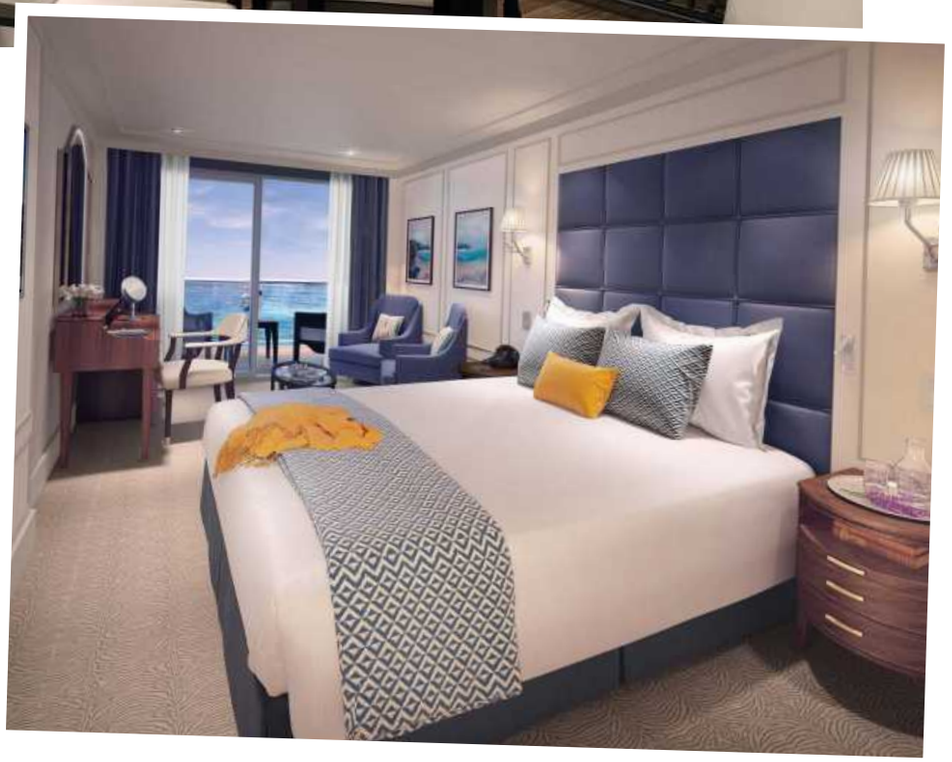
The *Cruise International* Awards 2015 were the talking point on Channel 4's *Countdown* on the day of the ceremony when presenter Nick Hewer spoke at length about the awards and their popularity.

Hewer, who hosted the *Cruise International* Awards in 2011, told *Countdown* viewers: "If winter really fills you with dread there's a big awards event that might interest you because tonight the *Cruise International* Awards take place."

Hewer added that he was so seduced by everyone talking about cruise holidays when he hosted the *Cruise International* Awards that he was inspired to go on a cruise himself. "(My wife) Catherine and I went off on a little ship, a Seabourn ship, in the West Indies - I loved it," he said.



NEW SHIP FOR SAGA



Saga Cruises has announced plans to update its shipping capacity, with an all-new Saga cruise ship expected to be delivered in summer 2019 and the option to order a second for delivery in 2021.

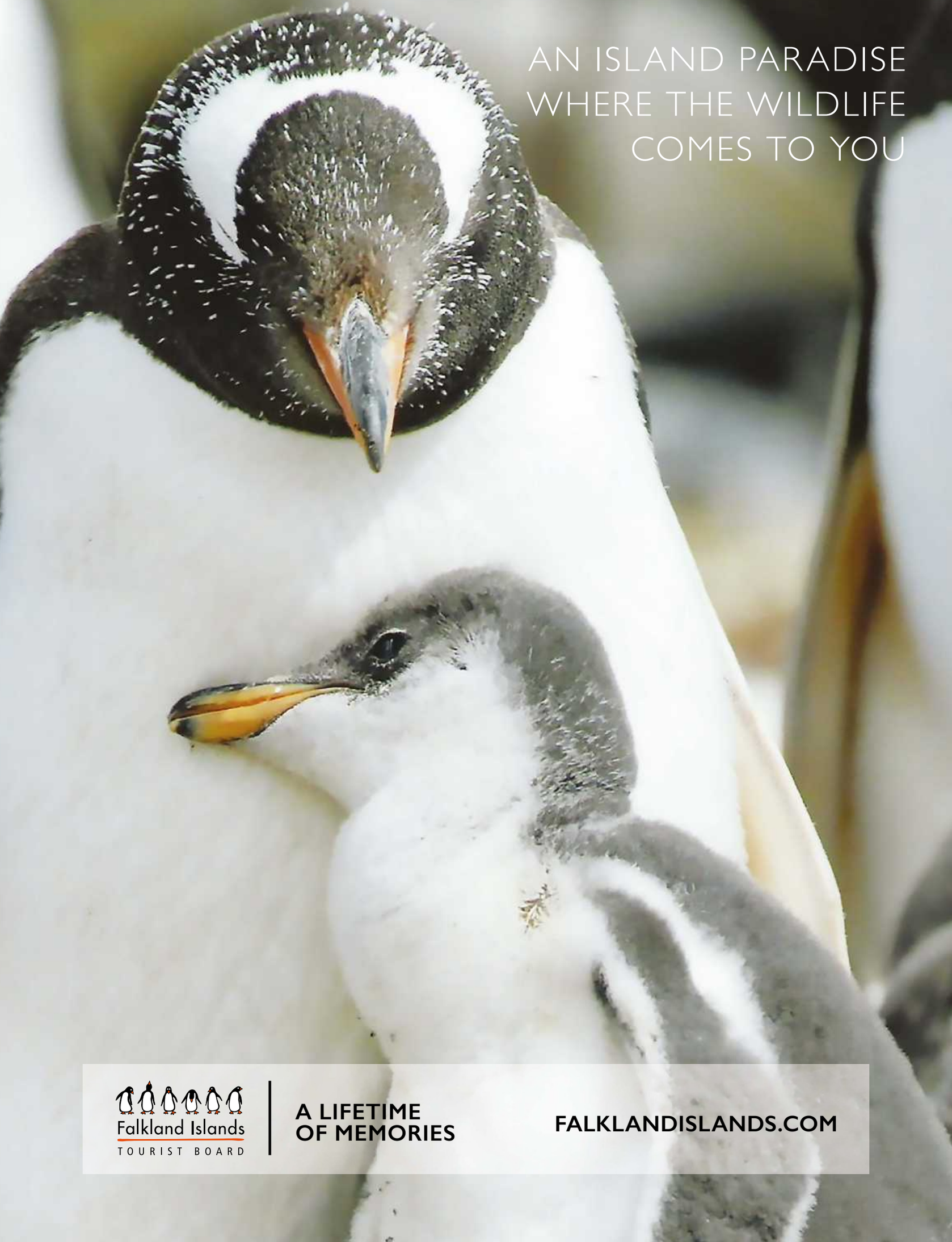
The new ship will be for fewer than 1,000 passengers and retain the intimacy and personal touch for which Saga is renowned, but with some new features including balconies for all cabins.

Plans for the ship will be refined over the coming months but it is expected the new ship will offer 540 suites and cabins each with a balcony (travel.saga.co.uk).



TICKETS ON SALE FOR TELEGRAPH CRUISE SHOW

Planning your next cruise? Come and see us at the Telegraph Cruise Show, which takes place at London's ExCel centre from 8 to 10 January 2016. It's your chance to see the very best of the cruise industry in one place, including the latest travel deals and holiday ideas. For more details and to book tickets, visit cruiseshow.telegraph.co.uk.


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CULINARY EXPERIENCES *for Sirena*





The newest member of the Oceania Cruises fleet, *Sirena*, set to debut in April 2016, will feature two new speciality restaurants, Tuscan Steak and Red Ginger, with the Grand Dining Room transforming into Jacques Bistro for lunch.

Tuscan Steak, a completely new restaurant concept inspired by both Oceania Cruises' traditional steak house, Polo Grill, and the line's authentic Italian restaurant, Toscana, offers succulent steaks and seafood with a Tuscan flair, such as iberico de bellota pork chop with gaeta black olives and Maine lobster fra diavolo.

Red Ginger, the contemporary Asian-inspired restaurant currently available on sister ships *Marina* and *Riviera*, will offer familiar culinary delights such as miso glazed sea bass and lobster pad thai.

Available for lunch, Jacques Bistro, in *Sirena*'s Grand Dining Room, will offer elegant French fare and feature signature dishes by legendary chef Jacques Pépin, such as lemon sole fillet with seafood cream sauce and braised oxtail terrine.

Scheduled to enter service on 27 April 2016 with a 14-night cruise from Barcelona to Venice, 684-guest *Sirena* will feature a mix of classic destinations and exotic new ports of call, including Gaeta, Italy; Golfito, Costa Rica; and La Paz, Mexico. For more details, visit oceaniacruises.com.

CHINESE NAME FOR MAJESTIC PRINCESS

Princess Cruises has announced that their new ship *Majestic Princess* will also carry a Chinese name, chosen by Carnival's China employees, meaning "Grand World" or "Grand Spirit" when it makes its debut in 2017.

The new ship will homeport in Shanghai, China year-round beginning in summer 2017, sailing to Japan and Korea, and become the first vessel built specifically for Chinese guests, incorporating a unique blend of international and Chinese features. For more information, visit princess.com.



CRUISES GROWING IN POPULARITY

The Association of British Travel Agents' Consumer Trends Survey 2015 revealed that 13 per cent of UK consumers intend to take a cruise holiday in 2016, up from 10 per cent who actually did so in 2015.

Andy Harmer, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) UK & Ireland Director, said: "It's great news that more people are considering a cruise, a holiday which can offer so much choice to so many different people."



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Grand Canal, Venice

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CRUISE Style

Our pick of the hottest fashion buys for your trip



SILK CHARM

A pretty silk scarf from Princess Yachts will add a luxurious accent (£199, thomaspink.com).



CUTE CLUTCH

This smart rafia box clutch bag comes in a fab range of pretty jewel colours (£165, lusso-london.com).



PRETTY GEMS

Add some sparkle to any outfit with a pastel bracelet (£75, Jaeger.co.uk).





SWIMSUIT MAGIC

A coral red tummy control suit will help you feel fab (£65, seasprayswimwear.com).

Beach chic

Stay cool on your winter sun cruise in a Seventies-style floppy hat and pretty gypsy blouse from La Redoute

CLEVER SHORTS

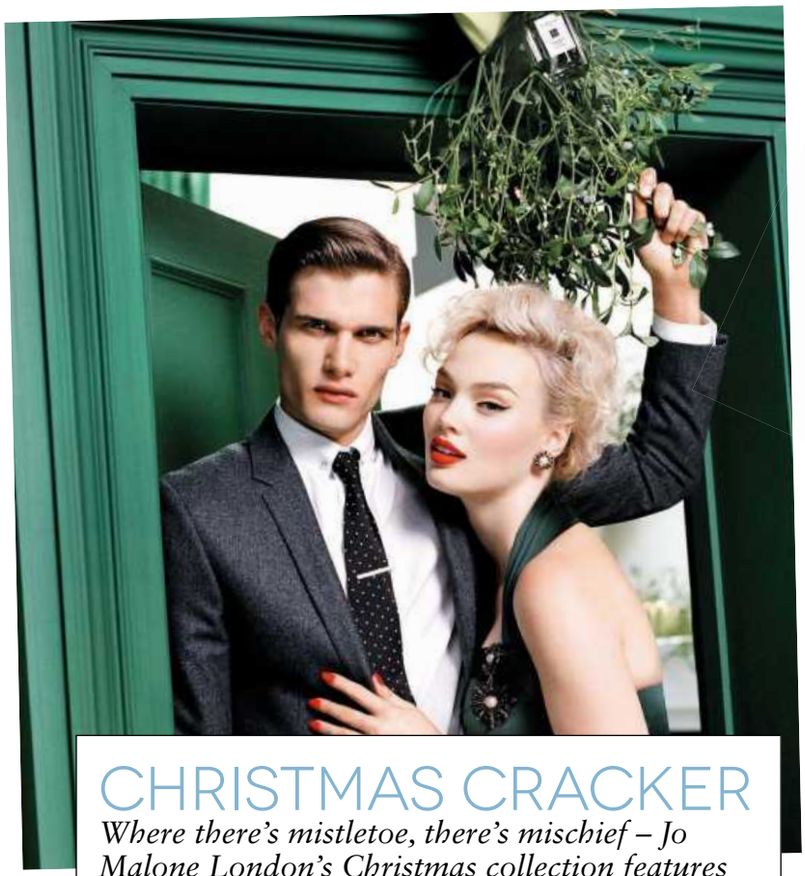
We're crazy about the brilliant range of temperature controlled clothing from HotSquash (£39, hotsquash.com).





PURRFECT SHADES

Embrace your inner Audrey Hepburn in these cat-eye sunglasses (£98, baileynelson.co.uk).



CHRISTMAS CRACKER

Where there's mistletoe, there's mischief – Jo Malone London's Christmas collection features gorgeous gifts including colognes and our favourite, a beautiful cracker filled with goodies including Blackberry and Bay Cologne, Peony and Blush Suedy Body Crème and Lime Basil and Mandarin Body and Hand Wash.





GOOD **TO GO**

Estée Lauder's genius new Double Wear Makeup To Go Liquid Compact gives you eight hours of complexion perfection at the push of a button. A Tri-Moisture Complex infuses and locks in all-day moisture while Argireline and Milk Thistle Extract smooth the skin (available from Estée Lauder Travel Retail Locations worldwide).

Beauty NEWS

The very latest products and tips to keep you looking and feeling gorgeous on your travels





CULT **CLASSIC**

Beauty icon Crème de la Mer recently celebrated its 50th birthday. Inspired by the Pacific Ocean, the brand was created by Dr Max Huber, who sought to create a miracle in a jar to help heal his own skin. Today it's a must-buy around the world (available from travel retail locations worldwide).

LUXE **LIPS**

We love Bobbi Brown's new ultra-glam Luxe Lip Colour – it glides on effortlessly, giving incredible, bold coverage with a soft nourishing shine and comes in 18 gorgeous shades – all in a luxurious crest-embossed gold tube (available from Bobbi Brown Travel Retail Locations worldwide).

Go online: For more style ideas go to **cruise-international.com/category/cruise-style-blog/**



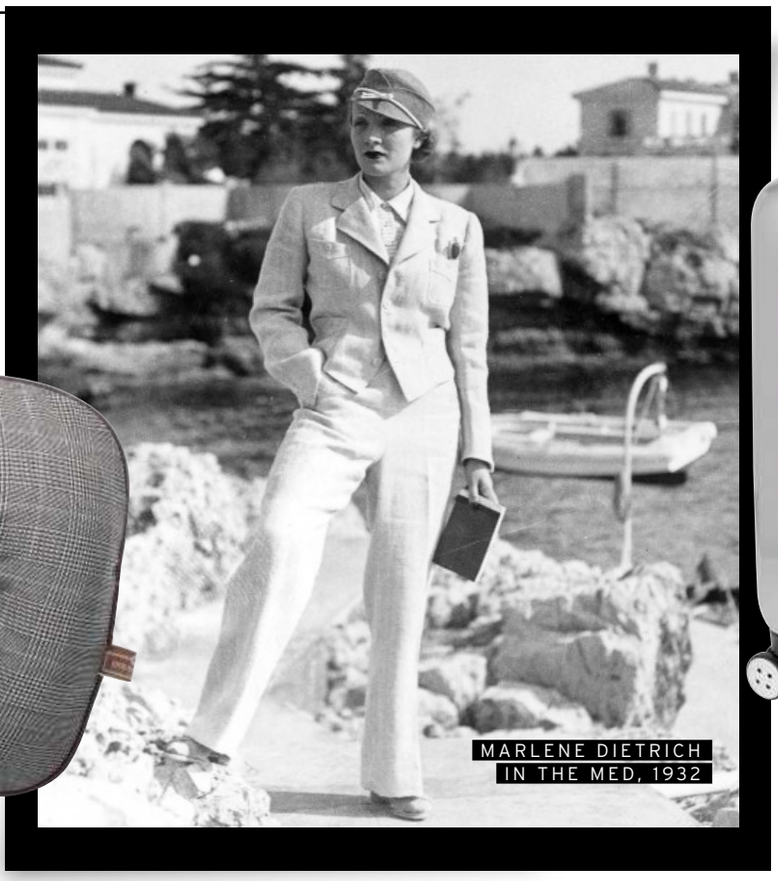
Love for Nepal

Aveda is donating a percentage of the sale of its Christmas travel gift sets 'A Gift of Renewal for your Journey' to the charity Global Greengrants for on-going Nepal earthquake relief. The gift sets feature the signature aromas of Stress-Fix, Beautifying and Shampure (available from Aveda Travel Retail Locations worldwide).

SLEEP EASY

Travel in comfort with this luxury inflatable neck pillow in Prince of Wales check, made from high quality wool milled in Yorkshire, and complemented by soft chocolate brown velvet (£75, otisbatterbee.com).





MARLENE DIETRICH IN THE MED, 1932



WHEELY GOOD

Hard sided and ultra lightweight, this medium Ted Baker trolley case teams classic herringbone with black accents and four spinner wheels (£245, caseluggage.com).

CHAIN STORE

Keep your jewellery safe and secure inside this smart travel case crafted in stone coloured soft leather with contrasting ice blue goat suede lining – perfect for the frequent traveller (£325, stowlondon.co.uk).



LET'S go

Our pick of the hottest buys for your travels



CRYSTAL CLEAR

Compact and elegant, Swarovski Optik's CL Companion Polaris binoculars are comfortable to use with high-precision optics and available with an 8x or 10x magnification (£1,050, swarovskioptik.com).



TURN IT UP

Handy and stylish, this smart laptop speaker has three hours of battery life, comes with a USB cable and is protected by a leather case (£49.95, massimodutti.com).

Go online: For more style ideas go to **cruise-international.com/cruise-style**

PHOTO: © GETTY IMAGES

Chic and stylish luggage and accessories for your cruise

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THE NEW TRIDENT

C60 TRIDENT PRO 600 – Swiss made dive watch with automatic mechanical movement, unidirectional rotating ceramic (ZrO_2) bezel and water resistance to 60 bar/600m. Available in 38mm and 42mm case sizes, five dial/bezel combinations and four strap styles.

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CRUISE Well

Every issue we bring you the latest health and wellbeing news



Get pampered

Sea days are the perfect opportunity to indulge in some pampering. On Hapag-Lloyd's *Europa 2*, guests can take advantage of a range of therapies, including Ayurveda massage, hot stone, thalasso (seaweed) and shiatsu, as well as exotic treatments such as lomi lomi, a traditional Hawaiian oil massage (hl-cruises.com).

Did you know?

Pumpkins are incredibly good for you. Packed with vitamin A and low-calorie, they're also a great source of fibre.



MINI TAKE-AWAY

Travelling light? Nivea's range of mini-sun care is perfect for your Caribbean cruise, with a range of SPFs to choose from. Bottles are just 50ml, so you can take them through airport security (from £5.99, nivea.co.uk).





WIN BRIC'S LUGGAGE WORTH £1,000

Loved by sophisticated travellers everywhere, Italian accessories label Bric's creates some of the world's most luxurious luggage, with its Bellagio and Bojola collections timeless and practical.

Cruise International and Case Luggage, the go-to store for the world's finest luggage, are offering the chance to win a Bric's luggage set worth £1,000.

The trio of cases includes the Bellagio 70cm four-wheel trolley, Bojola medium holdall, and Bojola Hanging Washkit, all in cream.

To enter, go online at cruise-international.com/case-luggage-competition. All entries must be received by 11.59pm on Friday 18 December 2015. Chelsea Magazine Company terms and conditions apply.



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Tempting TREATS

French pâtissier and celebrity chef **Eric Lanlard** is one of P&O Cruises' acclaimed Food Heroes. Here he shares three deliciously indulgent cake recipes

CREAM CHEESE BROWNIES SERVES 12

PREPARATION TIME: 30 MINUTES
COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES

This takes the best of a rich, traditional brownie, but given a twist: the soft cream cheese adds a soft touch as well as a fresh sour-zesty taste.

FOR THE BROWNIES

150g (5oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
200g (7oz) plain dark chocolate, broken into pieces
100ml (3½ fl oz) freshly made strong espresso
250g (9oz) caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
A pinch of salt
3 eggs
100g (3½oz) plain flour

FOR THE MARBLING MIXTURE

150g (5oz) cream cheese
60g (2¼oz) caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
1 tsp vanilla extract

METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan 160°C)/350°F/ gas mark 4). Grease a 20cm (8in) square tin with extra butter, and line it with baking paper.
- Melt the measured butter and the chocolate in a large bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, stirring occasionally. (The bowl should not touch the water.) Stir in the coffee, then remove the bowl from the heat and cool slightly.
- Stir the sugar, vanilla and salt into the butter-chocolate mixture, then whisk in the eggs, using an electric hand whisk, and beat until smooth. Sift in the flour and carry on beating until glossy. Set aside.
- For the marbling mixture, in a bowl, beat the cream cheese until smooth, then stir in the sugar, egg and vanilla.
- Spoon the first, dark mixture into the prepared tin, then add the cheese marbling mixture and use a knife to cut through to create a marbled effect. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. You may need to cover the tin with a piece of foil for the last 10 minutes of cooking.
- Allow to cool on a rack, then cut into squares.



ALE FRUIT LOAF SERVES 8

PREPARATION TIME: OVERNIGHT SOAKING, PLUS 10 MINUTES. COOKING TIME: 1 HOUR

This is a very simple recipe, but so tasty. Our kitchen is next to the Young's Brewery, known for a special ale with roasted cocoa beans. It's the perfect partner for this recipe, but any good local ale will work too.

390g (13½oz) mixed dried fruit
250ml strong beer or ale
unsalted butter, for greasing
100g (3½oz) soft dark brown sugar
85g (3oz) self-raising flour
100g (3½oz) wholemeal self-raising flour
3 tsp ground mixed spice
2 eggs, beaten

METHOD

- Put the dried fruit into a large pan and cover with the bottled beer. Gently heat the fruit until the beer is hot, but not boiling. Remove from the heat, cover and leave overnight.
- When you are ready to cook the loaf, preheat the oven to 140°C (fan 120°C)/275°F/ gas mark 1) and grease a 25 x 11cm (10 x 4.in) loaf tin with butter.
- Add the sugar, flours, mixed spice and eggs to the fruit mixture. Stir well until combined.
- Pour the mixture into the prepared loaf tin. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour until risen, pale brown and firm to the touch. Cover with a tea towel and leave on a wire rack to cool, still in its tin.
- When the loaf has completely cooled, remove from the tin and wrap the loaf tightly in clingfilm. Keep in a cool, dry place for up to six weeks. This loaf is delicious toasted and buttered with raspberry jam or served with a piece of Wensleydale cheese.



CHOCOLATE, PUMPKIN AND PECAN CAKE SERVES 8

PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES, PLUS COOLING AND RESTING OVERNIGHT. COOKING TIME: 1 HOUR 25 MINUTES

I'd describe this cake as a perfect winter warmer, full of earthy flavours and a spicy, nutty crunch. It's best eaten a day after baking.

125g (4oz) pecan nuts
1 tsp cayenne pepper
225g (7½oz) dark chocolate, roughly chopped
150g (5oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
275g (9oz) dark muscovado sugar
3 eggs
275ml (9fl oz) water
3 tsp vanilla paste or extract
250g (8oz) self-raising flour
3 tsp ground cinnamon
100g (3½oz) peeled, deseeded pumpkin, coarsely grated
Cocoa powder, for dusting

METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 170°C (fan 150°C)/325°F/gas mark 3). Grease a 23cm (9in) diameter springform cake tin and line with baking paper.
- In a large bowl, mix the pecans and cayenne pepper together. Place the nuts on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 10 minutes, or until they are golden and crunchy. Leave to cool, then roughly chop.
- Melt the chocolate and butter together in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water, making sure the surface of the water does not touch the bowl.
- Beat the eggs and sugar together in a bowl until nice and smooth, then beat in the melted chocolate mixture, followed by the water and vanilla. Sift the flour and cinnamon together, then fold in until smooth. Fold in the pumpkin and chopped pecans.
- Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 1 hour 10 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, and then turn out on to a cooling rack to cool completely.
- Wrap the cake in clingfilm and store at room temperature for at least 24 hours before eating. Dust with cocoa powder before serving.

Go online: For more ideas visit **cruise-international.com**

P&O CRUISES







Britannia

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At P&O Cruises, we knew we had something special in Britannia, but it's always nice to have it confirmed! With the title of 'Best New Ship' in both the Cruise International Awards and the Cruise Critic 2015 Editors' Picks Awards, we're proud to have been recognised by both the British public and a panel of Cruise Experts.

Britannia launched in March, and in that short time she has hit the headlines all around the globe. With her designer interiors, opulent spa and dining experiences crafted by all five of our Food Heroes, she has brought a new dimension to the P&O Cruises experience. Britannia's gastronomic experiences have also wowed; her combination of The Epicurean restaurant, Sindhu and The Glass House turning heads at the Cruise Critic awards, and contributing to another win, this time for P&O Cruises as a whole, for 'Best Dining'.

So, we've given you a little taste of exactly what sets Britannia apart. Intrigued? We hope so. So much lies in store, along with a very warm welcome. If you've yet to become acquainted with her, there's no time like the present, so give us a call or visit our website and we'd be only too happy to introduce you.

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NEW CRUISES 2016

Want to know which ocean and river ships will be making waves in 2016, and which destinations are going to be hot (and cool)? **Nick Dalton** has the answers





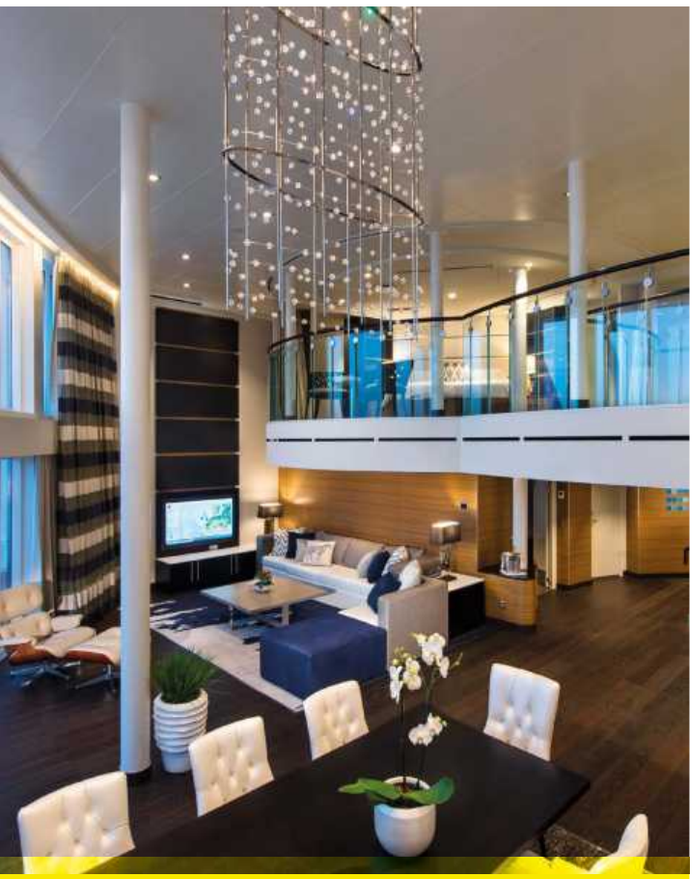














Clockwise from far left: Carnival Vista's Havana Pool; the Royal Loft on board Royal Caribbean's Ovation of the Seas; water slides launchpad on Harmony of the Seas; Norwegian Escape's outdoor nightclub Spice H2O; stateroom on board Holland America Line's MS Koningsdam; Carnival Vista's WaterWorks aqua park

NEW ships

The wave of ships that has been arriving over the past few years show no sign of slowing. Next into the water is Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Escape*, arriving this autumn to sail year-round Caribbean cruises from Miami; the 4,200-passenger fun palace is Norwegian's largest, with a three-deck high aqua park and ropes course, Broadway musicals and many new bars and restaurants. Work started in September on a sister ship, due to be delivered for spring 2017. A nine-night *Eastern Caribbean* fly-cruise, departing 1 January 2016, starts at £1,605pp (ncl.co.uk; 0845 201 8900).

Carnival Vista is Carnival's 25th 'fun ship' and will be its biggest yet, with capacity for 4,000. It celebrates Caribbean style with Cuban-themed rooms and outdoor hangouts such as the Havana Bar & Pool, the SkyRide, an 800ft track suspended around the deck that passengers can circle in pedal-powered cars, and the first IMAX cinema at sea. After several Mediterranean cruises it heads back to the States for Caribbean sailings. An eight-day fly-cruise from Barcelona, departing 23 September 2016, starts at £753pp (carnival.co.uk; 0843 374 2272).

Holland America's *MS Koningsdam*, for 2,650 guests, arrives in Europe in May for several Med cruises before moving to northern waters and a Caribbean winter. Much of the interior is the work of design guru Adam D Tihany, who created the modernistic At.mosphere restaurant 122 floors up Dubai's Burj Khalifa. Exciting spaces include the atrium skylight that will feature changing projections such as the night sky. The seven-night premiere voyage fly-cruise from Civitavecchia, departing 8 April 2016, starts at £1,079pp (hollandamerica.com; 0843 374 2300).

Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas* and *Harmony of the Seas* arrive in Southampton in April. *Ovation* (swiftly heading for China) has all the attractions – skydiving simulator, North Star viewing pod and bumper cars – of sister ships *Quantum of the Seas* and

CARNIVAL VISTA IS CARNIVAL'S 25TH 'FUN SHIP' AND CELEBRATES CARIBBEAN STYLE WITH OUTDOOR HANGOUTS SUCH AS THE HAVANA BAR & POOL AND THE SKYRIDE











Clockwise from top left: Viking Sea; a Concierge Suite on board Regent Seven Seas Explorer; Thomson Discovery's pool area; the Red Ginger restaurant on board Oceania Sirena; the atrium on board Viking Sea

Anthem of the Seas. *Harmony* is the world's biggest cruise ship, for 5,400 guests, and sails the Med before heading to Florida for Caribbean itineraries. Its attractions include Ultimate Abyss, the tallest waterslide at sea with with a 100ft drop. A five-night *Western Mediterranean* cruise on *Harmony of the Seas* from Barcelona, departing 7 June 2016, starts at £1,176pp.

Viking launched their first ocean ship, *Viking Star*, this year, offering a Scandinavian-influenced boutique style experience, and it will be joined by *Viking Sea* next year. An eight-day *Romantic Mediterranean* fly-cruise from Barcelona to Civitavecchia, departing 7 February 2016, starts at £2,229pp (0800 458 6900; vikingcruises.co.uk).

In the ultra-luxury market, Regent Seven Seas introduces *Regent Seven Seas Explorer*, with capacity for 738. A debut 14-night Monte Carlo to Venice fly-cruise, departing 20 July 2016, starts at £7,449pp, all-inclusive with excursions (rsss.com; 02380 682280.

In December 2016, Seabourn debuts *Encore*, which will carry 604 guests; a 16-night *Holy Land & Arabian Gems* cruise from Piraeus to Dubai, departing 4 December 2016, starts at £5,999pp, all-inclusive, flights not included (seabourn.com; 0843 373 2000).

Oceania Cruises in April introduces *Sirena* (684 guests), formerly Princess Cruises' *Ocean Princess*, after a £27m luxury makeover, with cruises around the Med including a 12-day *Divine Tides* fly-cruise from Rome to Istanbul, departing 22 May 2016, starting at £2,699pp including drinks package and free internet and tips (0345 505 1920; oceaniacruises.com).

Thomson, with its excellent value-for-money cruises, welcomes *Thomson Discovery*, its biggest ship yet (700 passengers). It was formerly Royal Caribbean's *Splendour of the Seas*



European GEMS

Explore beautiful destinations and discover acclaimed wine regions and new skills with award-winning luxury river cruise line AmaWaterways

If you've ever wanted to taste some of the world's finest wines while exploring the vineyards where the grapes are grown, or paint the water lilies of the stunning garden created by Monet himself, here's your chance. Luxury river cruise line AmaWaterways is offering an exquisite range of European itineraries for 2016 on board their incredible ships.

Praised by the Berlitz River Cruise Guide 2014 for the Highest Rated River Cruise Ships in Europe, AmaWaterways took the top 11 spots in the rankings, with its ship *AmaPrima* topping the list.

Recognising that more and more of its passengers want to have an immersive experience while on their holiday, AmaWaterways now offer select sailings that focus on wine or art.

For 2016, AmaWaterways has over 40 wine themed cruises to choose from, and has developed itineraries to further showcase the acclaimed wine regions of Europe. These unique sailings are hosted by wine experts and feature complimentary lectures, wine tastings, and excursions to historic vineyards and wine cellars.

AmaWaterways' art themed cruises, taking in *Paris & Normandy*, allow guests to paint their own versions of Monet's Water Lilies following a visit to the artist's famous home and gardens in Giverny.

WINE THEMED CRUISES

AmaWaterways' wine themed cruises include *The Enchanting Rhine*, *Melodies of the Danube*, *Enticing Douro* and *Provence & Spain*.

The *Taste of Bordeaux* itinerary, for example, explores the world famous wine region and follows a route along the Garonne River. Guests have the opportunity to visit Bordeaux's famous chateaux and vineyards, with a Medoc wine tasting in Pauillac and an excursion at Chateau de Montaigne in Libourne. In the region of Cubzac-les-Ponts there's the chance for more wine tasting while visiting the town of Cotes du Bourg, and upon returning to Bordeaux, guests can either tour a wine museum or embark on an optional Cognac excursion.

Seven-night *Taste of Bordeaux* cruises on board *AmaDolce* depart Bordeaux on 25 March 2016 and are priced from £1,799pp (saving up to £350pp), including flights from London.

ART THEMED CRUISES

AmaWaterways' art themed cruises allow guests to explore their creative side, and during the *Paris & Normandy* itinerary, guests are invited to paint their very own masterpiece. Cruising along the Seine, *AmaLegro* journeys through the same regions that inspired Renoir and Gauguin. Following immersive excursions to locations including Monet's gardens at Giverny, guests then return to the ship to paint the beautiful scenes they saw. Every painting session is hosted by an expert art instructor and all materials and utensils are provided.

A seven-night art cruise departs Paris on 8 April 2016 and is priced from £1,869pp (saving up to £390pp), including flights from London.

THE AMAWATERWAYS EXPERIENCE

A cruise with AmaWaterways includes return flights, non-UK transfers and all onboard meals, along with local wines, soft drinks and beers served during lunch and dinner. Tea and specialty coffees are complimentary, as is wifi. And a sightseeing tour is included at every town or city your ship visits too.

Visit the website **amawaterways.co.uk** or call **0808 223 5009** for more information.

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Clockwise from top: Stateroom on board Emerald Belle; Scenic Spirit's onboard pool; a Viking Longship Explorer Suite

and will sail out of Palma for Med cruises next season with plenty of Spanish calls, and with Saturday flights from 19 regional airports. A seven-night *Magic of Spain* fly-cruise, departing on 16 July 2016, starts from £1,169pp (thomson.co.uk; 0871 231 4691).

On the rivers, Viking River Cruises launches six more of its cool, modern Longships: *Tialfi* and *Alruna* on the Rhine, *Egil* on the Danube, *Vilhjalm* and *Kadlin* on the Seine and *Osfrid* on the Douro. *Rhine Discovery* cruises run up to nine times a month, from £1,145pp (vikingcruises.co.uk; 0800 319 6660).

Emerald Waterways, known for its cool, contemporary ships, in June welcomes its fifth vessel, *Emerald Belle*, which, like its sisters, has a heated pool with a retractable roof that transforms into a cinema at night. *Emerald Belle*'s first cruise, the 15-day *Splendours of Europe* (Amsterdam to Budapest) departing 5 June 2016, starts at £3,475pp (emeraldwaterways.co.uk; 0800 756 2091).

Scenic launches its latest Space Ship, *Scenic Azure*, on Portugal's Douro in April, offering 11-day return trips from Porto. Scenic also offers increased choice in Southeast Asia with the launch of *Scenic Spirit* on the Mekong in January and *Scenic Aura* on Irrawaddy in Myanmar in September. A 16-night Mystical Irrawaddy fly-cruise, departing on December 5, starts from £3,995pp (scenic.co.uk; 0808 278 7096).

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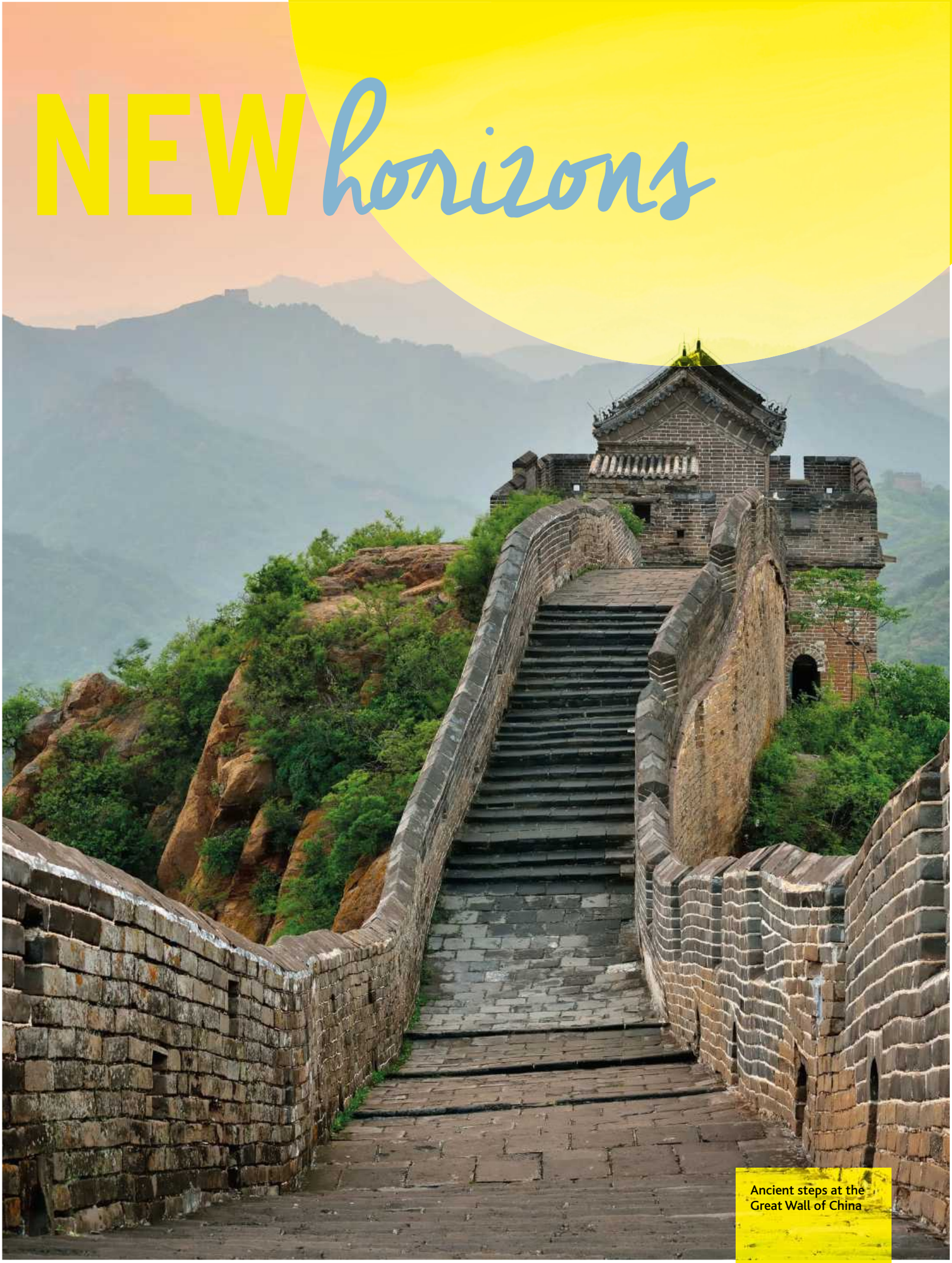
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Clockwise from top left: Incense in the Tien Hau temple, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; a rainforest in the Dominican Republic; Chinese lanterns in Shanghai, China

As Cuba continues to open up to the west (and, in particular, the US) more cruises than ever before are focusing on the colourful, timeless island, generally as part of Caribbean cruises as well as making Havana one of several calls on the island. Thomson Cruises offers a seven-night *Cuban Fusion* cruise departing Jamaica on 1 March 2016 from £1,077pp (0871 230 2800/ thomson.co.uk/cruise).

China is the hip new spot for faraway cruises. Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas* debuts in Southampton but will then depart for Tianjin in the country's north, where temples rub shoulders with skyscrapers, while still offering the chance to visit Beijing (100 miles away) and the Great Wall. Four other ships, including *Quantum of the Seas*, are based in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Xiamen – the fleet being most of any cruise company to be based in the country. A 12-night Tianjin to Singapore cruise on *Ovation of the Seas*, departing 16 November 2016, starts at £1,319pp, not including flights.

Holland America Line for 2016 has two ships sailing from Singapore with stops such as Thailand and Hong Kong. Vietnam, most generally a destination for river cruises on the Mekong Delta, is now firmly on the ocean cruise map. Not only Holland America but also Princess Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises, with its small ultra-luxury ships, have started visiting Ha Long Bay, dotted with limestone stacks, as well as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Azamara has a 10-night Thailand and Vietnam fly-cruise, departing Singapore, departing 30 November 2016, from £2,841pp.

Pandaw, known for its Mekong cruises in Vietnam and Cambodia, in September 2016 heads farther

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Stunning scenery at the Iguazu Falls National Park, Argentina

upriver with the first cruises into China. The 14-night itinerary on traditional, shallow-bottom boats links Vientiane in Laos and Jinghong in Yunnan Province, taking in Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand. Prices start from £3,400pp, cruise only. The company is also launching the 14-night *Rio, Iguazu Falls & the Amazon* tour with nine-night cruise starting in January 2016 from £3,200pp, cruise-only.

AmaWaterways offers art themed *Paris & Normandy* cruises that allow guests the opportunity to paint Monet's famous gardens in Giverny. A seven-night art cruise departs Paris on 8 April 2016 and is priced from £1,869pp (amawaterways.co.uk/ 0808 223 5009).

Norwegian Cruise Line offers its first visits to the Persian Gulf and India along with its first cruises in Asia and Australia since 2001-02. Starting in December 2016, there are departures from Istanbul, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sydney and Auckland.

The 11-night Singapore to Hong Kong cruise, departing on 11 December 2016, starts at just £829pp cruise only (ncl.co.uk; 0845 201 8900).

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The Golden Gap on Dorset's Jurassic Coast, UK

NEW ideas

Fathom is a new brand from the Carnival organisation that aims to give cruising a socially aware tag, with voyages around Cuba and the Dominican Republic (on the ship that was previously known as P&O's *Adonia*, starting in April 2016) helping out in educational, environmental and economic projects while enjoying local, sustainable food. Prices start from around £1,000, cruise only but include onshore 'social impact activities' (00 1206 626 8300; fathom.org).

Overnight stays in port continue to be a big trend for 2016 – instead of dashing round a place by day and being sailing by teatime, they give you the chance to amble back after a sunset drink and head out again after dinner.

They also allow you to enjoy a more 'immersive' experience – tours that allow you to see behind the veneer of a destination, sometimes with tea or dinners in local homes, or with private concerts in palaces.

Princess Cruises also has a new take on excursions with its TV-linked nature adventures in Europe and Alaska. There are wildlife watching (and often meeting) trips with Animal Planet and looks behind historical sites with the Discovery Channel.

On board there's plenty going on with more themed cruises than ever, whether it's chefs or yoga, golf or ballroom dancing, top name music acts to TV comedy stars.

There are also plenty of attempts to persuade you to upgrade your cruise, whether for added extras – Royal Caribbean launches its Royal Suite Class with a 'Royal Genie' butler, free internet, drinks package and speciality dining – or for food, with cruise companies providing more and more restaurants at a price. It used to be that speciality restaurants were a flat fee for a special treat but there are increasingly outlets for everything from sushi to gourmet burgers, often with item-by-item pricing.

It's not easy finding new destinations, but there are always new itineraries. *Viking Sea* has a novel *Bergen to the Bosphorus* cruise (departing 31 July 2016) that takes you from Norway to Istanbul in 15 days, taking in Lisbon, Malta and Athens (from £3,190pp, vikingcruises.co.uk). There are more cruises around the UK than ever – Saga even has one (departing Dover 14 June 2016, from £749pp) that calls at Portland in Dorset for the Jurassic Coast before nipping over to France.

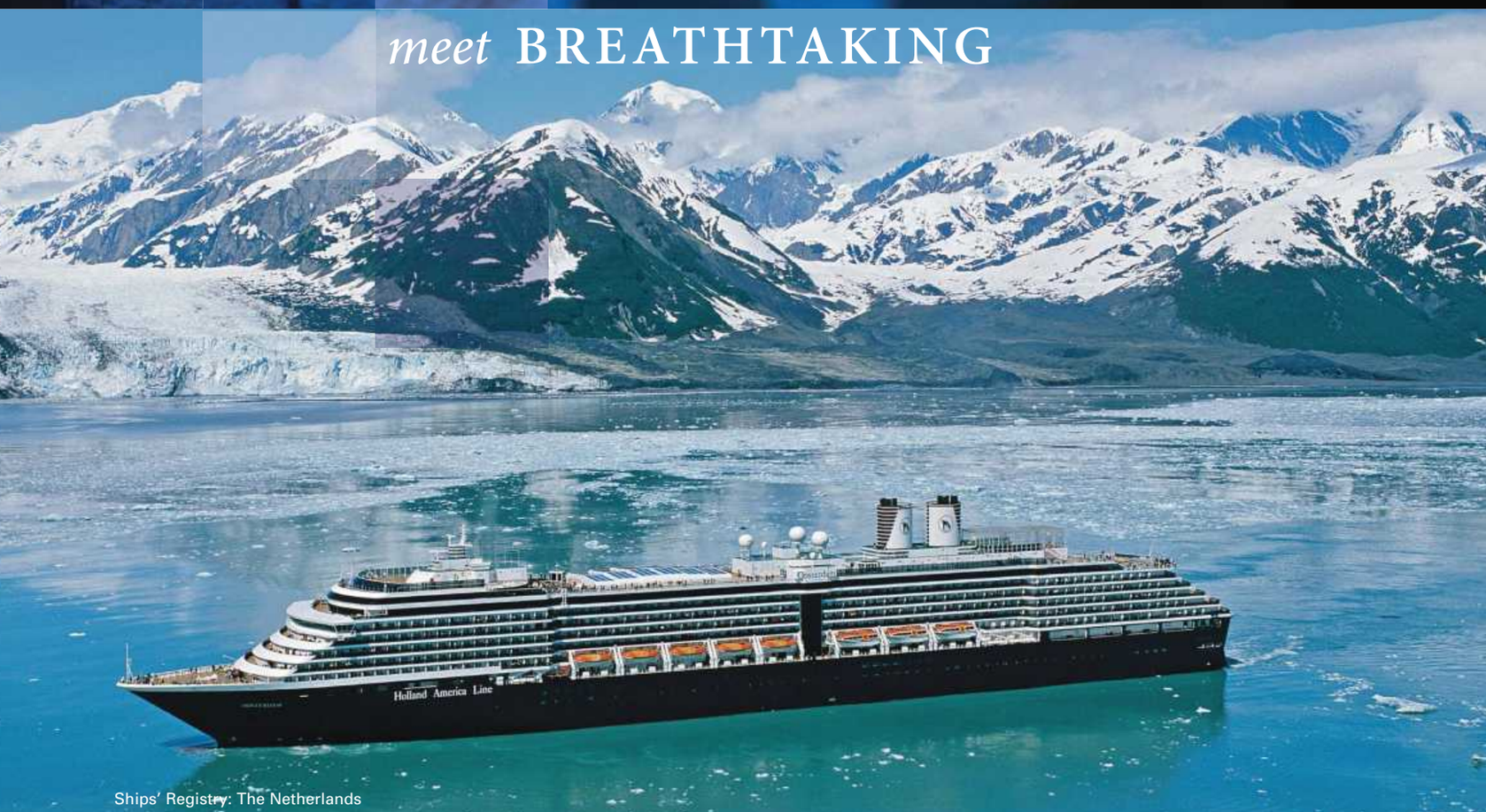
And even if a new ship isn't on the horizon, there's a new experience – Azamara Club Cruises is giving both its boutique-feel ships, *Quest* and *Journey,* a complete, radical refit before the summer season (azamaraclubcruises.co.uk).

Go online: For more cruise ideas for 2016 plus the very latest cruise news go to cruise-international.com

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WORLD adventures

A world cruise is a great way to visit a range of countries in one trip with ease, and Iglu Cruise has a fantastic range of itineraries

Often regarded as the ultimate way to travel, a world cruise is one of the best ways to explore the globe with minimal stress. From seeing San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, discovering Tokyo and Japan, marvelling at the temples of Bagan in Myanmar and exploring Rio, a typical world cruise itinerary allows you to do all this and more.

World cruises departing from the UK generally start from Southampton and cruise westbound over to the US. Often they cruise the Caribbean before sailing through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific, via Hawaii, to Australia and New Zealand. Full world cruises then usually continue to Asia, sailing to India, around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and then either through the Suez Canal and on to the Mediterranean, or around Africa before cruising through the Atlantic. Some world cruises may sail eastbound but still take in most of the above cruise destinations. A full world cruise usually takes around 80 to 110 days to complete, depending on the itinerary.

Alternatively, if your time is limited, world cruises are made up of sectors, which means that you can choose to book one or two sectors. Iglu Cruise can tailor-make your holiday too. Itineraries are available in varying durations – from several weeks to a couple of months, depending on your cruise needs. With this option, guests simply fly out and meet up with their ship during the world cruise.

World cruises and sector voyages not only offer a unique way of travelling the globe, but also often have amazing onboard benefits, especially if booked early. Many include onboard spending money, free excursions and free upgrades to exclusive dining venues.

P&O Cruises, for example, offers free onboard gratuities on some of their longer sailings. Past guests can also benefit greatly from special offers when rebooking – a maximum of £4,400 per cabin onboard spend could be available.

Additional benefits, including free wifi, can be enjoyed when booking through Iglu Cruise.

WORLD CRUISE OFFERS

FUSIONS OF THE FAR EAST WITH SINGAPORE & DUBAI STAYS

18 nights

On board Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth*

Departing Singapore on 1 April 2016

Prices start from £1,559pp

Following two nights in Singapore, board *Queen Elizabeth* and sail in comfort to Penang, Malaysia, and then on to Phuket, Thailand. Two days sailing takes you to Chennai, Madras, on India's east coast, before a further two days at sea takes you to Cochin, on India's west coast. Then, after three days cruising the Arabian Sea, you'll arrive in Dubai for a two-night hotel stay before flying home to the UK.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights to the UK
- 2-night hotel stays in Singapore and Dubai
- 13 nights cruising on *Queen Elizabeth*
- All overseas transfers



SAN FRANCISCO TO SOUTHAMPTON WITH STAY

25 nights

On board P&O Cruises' *Arcadia*
Departing San Francisco on 10 April 2016
Prices start from £2,149pp

Fly from the UK and stay for two nights in San Francisco, California, where you can cycle across the iconic Golden Gate Bridge to the pretty city of Sausalito. Later, sail south to San Diego, where you'll have time to explore the city's smart harbour and lively Gaslamp Quarter. Following three days at sea, explore the unspoiled beaches of Huatulco, Mexico, before a further two days at sea and Panama Canal cruising takes you to the city of Oranjestad on the colourful island of Aruba, and then St Maarten in the Caribbean, famous for its golden sands and turquoise sea. Following five days at sea, your next port of call is Ponta Delgada, part of the Azores in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, before a final three days at sea returns you home to Southampton.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Outbound flight
- 2-night hotel stay in San Francisco
- 23 nights cruising on *Arcadia*
- All overseas transfers

SOUTHAMPTON TO CAPE TOWN WITH STAY

20 nights

On board Cunard's *Queen Mary 2*
Departing Southampton on 10 January 2017
Prices start from £2,299pp

Board *Queen Mary 2* in Southampton and spend three days at sea before arriving at charming Funchal on the island of Madeira, known for its stunning gardens. Sail overnight to Santa Cruz, Tenerife – the largest of all the Canary Islands, and then spend eight days at sea enjoying the grandeur of the ship as it makes its way to Walvis Bay, or Whale Bay, Namibia, named so as it is a popular place to catch sight of humpback whales. A further day at sea takes you to Cape Town, South Africa, famous for its spectacular landscapes and imposing Table Mountain, where you'll leave the ship and enjoy two nights in a hotel and embark on a Winelands tour. Finally, an overnight flight returns you home to the UK.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 2-night hotel stay in Cape Town
- Half day Winelands tour
- 17 nights cruising on *Queen Mary 2*
- All overseas transfers
- Inbound flight

SYDNEY STAY AND CRUISE TO SOUTHAMPTON

54 nights

On board P&O Cruises' *Aurora*
Departing Sydney on 27 February 2017
Prices start from £5,599pp

Fly to Australia and explore Sydney, stay in a hotel for two nights, tour the world famous Opera House, and then board *Aurora* for four days at sea, which includes cruising Dusky and Doubtful Sound, a beautiful and complex fjord off the coast of New Zealand. Over the next few days, you'll make calls along the length of New Zealand, including Dunedin, Christchurch, the capital city Wellington, Tauranga and Auckland, the country's largest city. After two days at sea you'll arrive at the city of Lautoka in Fiji, and then, two days later, Apia, the largest city of Samoa. Cross the International Date Line (gaining a day) and sail for four days to the capital of Hawaii, Honolulu, on Oahu's south shore. A further four days at sea takes you to San Francisco, before visits to San Diego and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, known for its beaches and nightlife. Then it's on to Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala, the Panama Canal, Cartagena in Colombia, and then St Lucia in the Caribbean, with two days at sea separating each destination. The following day, visit another Caribbean island, Barbados, before five days at sea takes you to the Azores, with a further three days sailing before arriving home at Southampton.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Outbound flight
- 2-night hotel stay in Sydney
- Sydney Opera House tour
- 50 nights cruising on *Aurora*
- All overseas transfers

Go online: Visit the website at **iglucruise.com** or call **0208 254 3536** for more information.

IGLU CRUISE



Surf's up:
big wave
breaking, Maui

Aloha SPIRIT

A cruise around Hawaii give you a unique perspective of the islands, their culture and history, says **Sara Macefield**



ILLUSTRATION: © SCOTT JESSOP/PHOTO: © GETTY IMAGES

When Captain James Cook sailed into Hawaii in 1779, only nine years after stumbling across Australia, he was feted by islanders who adoringly believed this mysterious visitor was their fertility god, Lono.

Extravagant feasts and riotous merry-making marked his arrival, and by all accounts Cook's crew enthusiastically engaged in their own fertility rituals with obliging Hawaiian maidens.

Sailing into Honolulu nearly 240 years later on board Princess Cruises' ship *Grand Princess*, I had a sneaking suspicion that our arrival wouldn't be quite on that scale, but I was curious for a first glimpse of these distant Pacific isles, more than 7,000 miles from the UK (and a jet-lag inducing 11 hours behind BST).

As our taxi sped towards the high-rises of Waikiki, I noted that the wide roads lined with chic designer stores could have come from any smart American city.

But then, in front of us, the bay opened up; an arc of bright golden sand bordering the translucent emerald shimmer of the Pacific Ocean, embellished with small curls of foaming white rollers.

The water was dotted with surfboards, their riders waiting in hope of the perfect wave to whisk them towards the shore; while surf shacks scattered along the sands offered board rentals and lessons.

Of course the chance to join in proved irresistible and soon my husband, our 12-year-old daughters Dani and Holly and I were practising our best surfing stances as our laidback instructor Winnie launched us into the waves, shouting encouragement.

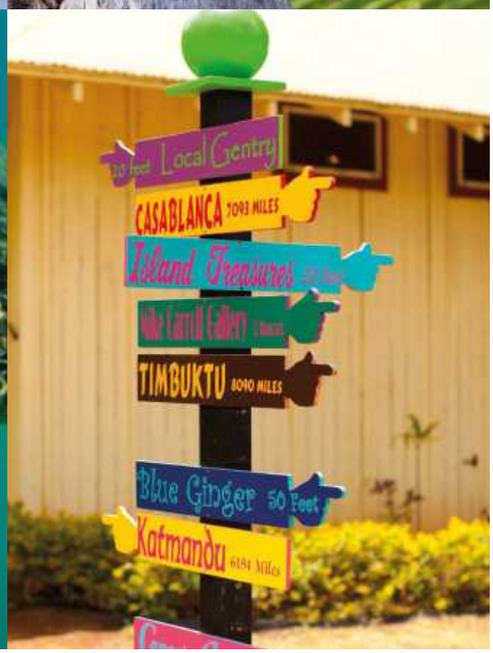
Needless to say, I soon became an expert at 'wipe out' and more adept at quickly climbing back onto my surfboard than staying on it in the first place; but it was certainly exhilarating, a lot of fun, and made for a memorable experience.









PHOTOS: © ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES



Above: Palm tree leaves on a beach silhouetted against the setting sun, Maui

Of course there is more to the island of O'ahu than surfing – most notably Pearl Harbor, where the world's attention will be focused next year as it will be 75 years since the base was attacked by the Japanese on 7 December 1941.

Another must-visit landmark is Honolulu's Iolani Palace, from where Hawaii's royal family ruled until the end of the 19th century, when the islands became a republic. It represented another chapter in the fascinating history of these outposts, originally named the Sandwich Islands by Captain Cook in honour of his expedition sponsor, the Earl of Sandwich.

Our days revolved around mealtimes and themed activities designed to get us into the Hawaiian mood.

The daily ukulele classes, which culminated in a concert at the end of the cruise, attracted an enthusiastic crowd of nearly 100, while hula dancing lessons proved a popular alternative. I tried my hand at lei-making classes and even had a go at origami – gentle stints that proved an ideal way to strike up conversations with fellow passengers.

Quizzes and trivia contests attracted a competitive crowd, while evening shows in the main theatre ranged from musical concerts to a mesmerising performance by sleight of hand magician Ben Seidman. The onboard restaurants adopted a Hawaiian flavour with menus featuring Pacific Rim dishes such as slow-cooked Hawaiian Luau pork, and delicious pineapple with honey-roasted pistachios.

THE ONBOARD RESTAURANTS ADOPTED A HAWAIIAN FLAVOUR WITH MENUS FEATURING PACIFIC RIM DISHES SUCH AS SLOW-COOKED LUAU PORK AND PINEAPPLE WITH PISTACHIOS

Even though the name never stuck, the Union flag did as the Hawaiians adopted it and, much to my surprise, to this day it is incorporated into the canton of the Hawaiian state flag.

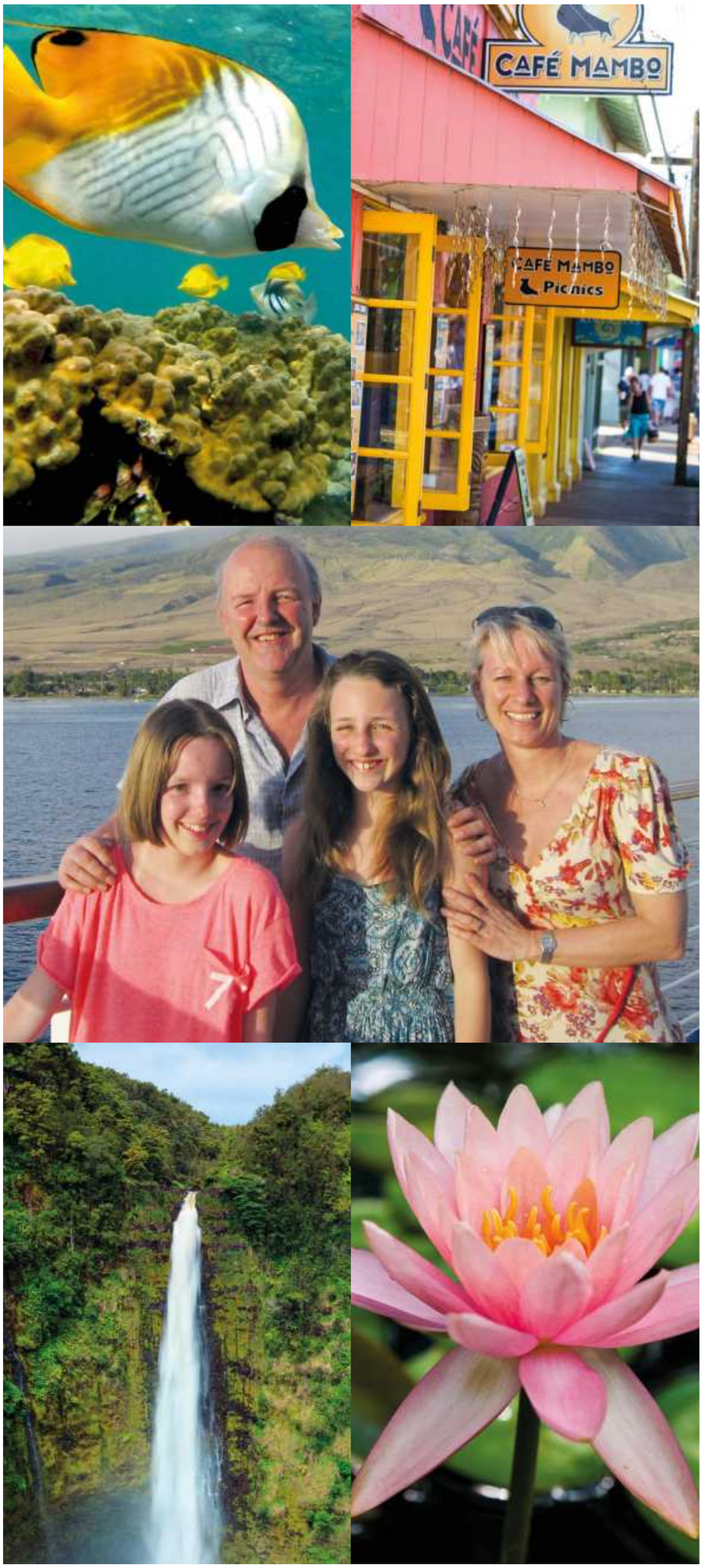
As Hawaii's capital and most developed hub on the island of O'ahu, Honolulu was a welcome first stop as the archipelago takes four days to reach from Los Angeles, or five days from Vancouver, two of the West Coast cities from where Princess voyages depart.

During our crossing of more than 2,300 nautical miles from Canada's west coast, we'd fallen into a daily routine of bracing deck walks and competitive table-tennis matches, while Holly and Dani splashed around in the deck pool under its all-weather roof.

For an all-American-style alternative, we also opted for the succulent steaks in the Crown Grill where, for a $25 supplement, we chose between tender hunks of filet mignon and hulking 16oz sirloin cuts.

With only four ports of call before our ship headed back across the Pacific Ocean, we were determined to capitalise on our days on shore.

On the "Garden Isle" of Kaua'i, we opted for a snorkelling expedition in the hope of spotting turtles.



Clockwise from top left: Vibrant kikakapu and yellow tang fish swim off the coast of Kona, Hawaii; a café; Sara Macefield with her family; water lily; Akaka Falls, Hawaii

Alas, they proved elusive, but after swimming through shoals of bright yellow tangs (whose dainty demeanour has earned them the nickname Edwardian Ladies) and blue parrot fish, we did get to stroke a velvety octopus that our guide found nestling on the reef.

Kauai's lush surroundings have made it a favoured holiday spot among Hollywood stars, with the likes of Johnny Depp, Sylvester Stallone and Pierce Brosnan reputedly owning holiday homes here, while its rugged interior has made it a popular film backdrop too, providing the setting for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Maui is another isle famous for its ruggedly beautiful topography, and the charming former whaling port and royal capital Lahaina. However, our attention was focussed on off-shore waters during a whale-watching trip where we followed a mother humpback and her calf for a fascinating few hours.

But it was the biggest and rainiest island of Hawaii, also know as the Big Island, that gave us a true taste of the archipelago's rumbling volcanic nature. This is home to the Volcanoes National Park where seismic tremors and regular eruptions add an extra frisson of anticipation to visits here.

Clouds of hot steam billowing from rock vents remind visitors of the power lurking beneath the seemingly benign landscape, with viewing platforms outside the visitor centre giving an ideal vantage point over the vast lava strewn wasteland surrounding the active Kilauea Volcano, which last erupted in 2008.

Inside the centre were a series of fascinating accounts and film footage of volcanic eruptions; fountains of molten rock shooting high into the air; curtains of fire; and vents roaring like jet engines. It was a stark reminder of nature's unpredictable power.

Before setting foot in Hawaii, my perception of the islands had been confined to images of Elvis crooning his way through *Blue Hawaii* and wave-riders furiously paddling outrigger canoes in *Hawaii Five-0*. I hadn't expected to see such staggeringly beautiful scenery. I'll remember the lilting tone of the ukulele floating across the warm Waikiki breeze, and the greeting we heard everywhere we went: "Aloha", which means love, affection, hello and goodbye.

GETTING THERE

A 14-night round-trip sailing from Los Angeles on *Ruby Princess* departs on 24 March 2016, calling at Honolulu, Kauai, Hawaii, Maui and Ensenada (Mexico) and costs from £1,230pp cruise-only. Flights start at £800pp and depart the UK on the day prior to the sailing. For more details, call 0843 374 2401 or visit princess.com.

Go online: Read a review of a cruise in the Baltic on board *Regal Princess* at **cruise-international.com/regal-princess-baltic-cruise-review**

PHOTOS: © AWL IMAGES/BIG ISLAND VISITORS BUREAU (BIVB)/KAWIKA SINGSON/HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA)/TOR JOHNSON

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CLIA UK & Ireland Director Andy Harmer with Catherine Foster of Visit Norway



Naomi Thornton of Saga Cruises with broadcaster Jennie Bond



Actress and guest presenter Michelle Collins





Roger Allard, Chairman of All Leisure Group, with guest presenter Cheryl Baker and Julie Peasgood



Carly Perkins, Marketing Manager of Holland America Line and Seabourn Cruise Line, with Shelley Williams of Bric's Luggage



Gillian Corley, Head of Marketing and Dave Coombs, Head of PR, Disney Cruise Line



Cruise International Editor Liz Jarvis (centre) with Viking Cruises' UK Head of Sales Neil Barclay and UK Managing Director Wendy Atkin-Smith

"THE CRUISE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY'RE VOTED FOR BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE ACTUALLY TRAVELLED ON OUR SHIPS."

Wendy Atkin-Smith, UK MD of Viking Cruises





Andy Harmer with Kate McWilliams of Lotus UK representing the State of Alaska



Giles Hawke, Executive MD of MSC Cruises



Tony Roberts, Vice-President UK & Europe, Princess Cruises



Richard Twynam, Managing Director, Azamara Club Cruises



Dan Whitehouse of Titan Travel with Jennie Bond

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Actress and presenter Julie Peasgood



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Andy Harmer with Bernard Carter, UK & Europe Managing Director, Oceania Cruises, and Julie Peasgood


Stuart Leven, Managing Director, Royal Caribbean, with Sophie Holloway of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau



Naomi Thornton and Amy Meyer of Saga Cruises


Toby Shaw, Director of Marketing & PR, Celebrity Cruises, with Jennie Bond


Michelle Collins with Nick Wilkinson, Director Business Development Northern Europe & MEA, Norwegian Cruise Line



Mikael Krafft, founder and owner of Star Clippers, with Jennie Bond





Winner

PRINCESS CRUISES

Princess Cruises, celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2015, were named Best Cruise Line for the second year running. You were impressed by their wide range of itineraries, shore excursions, cuisine, entertainment and of course ships, including newcomers *Royal Princess* and *Regal Princess*.

Highly Commended

P&O CRUISES

With its contemporary ships, appearances by celebrity chefs, *Strictly Come Dancing*-themed cruises and well-thought out itineraries P&O Cruises continues to score highly with you.

BEST RIVER CRUISE LINE



Winner

VIKING RIVER CRUISES

Viking has continued to go from strength to strength in 2015, and you love their stylish Longships, excellent range of itineraries (including those along the Mekong, Yangtze and Irrawaddy) and superb onboard service.

Highly Commended

EMERALD WATERWAYS

Relative newcomer Emerald impressed you with its innovative ships – *Sun*, *Sky*, *Dawn* and *Star*, each offering contemporary suites, and its itineraries along European rivers the Seine, Danube and Rhine, as well as The Mekong.



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Imperial Jewels of China

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Prices correct at the time of going to print but are subject to change. From prices are per person and based on two people sharing the lowest grade stateroom available, departing on selected dates in 2016. Prices valid until 31 December 2015. Single supplements apply. For more information please visit www.vikingcruises.co.uk/terms-conditions or call us.

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Winner

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Highly Commended

CUNARD LINE

Cunard's three ships – *Queen Elizabeth*, *Queen Mary 2* and *Queen Victoria* – offer traditional-style cruising with the added attraction of the exemplary White Star service.





Winner

VIKING RIVER CRUISES

With their ships offering elegant Nordic interiors and a sophisticated, relaxed vibe, as well as stimulating shore excursions and excellent food, Viking were your choice as the most luxurious river cruise line.

Highly Commended

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Highly Commended

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Included chauffeur is a private service up to 75 miles each way, or a shared service from 76-250 miles each way. All excursions are optional, at an additional cost, and are subject to availability and change. Some of the highlights detailed may only be seen on optional excursions or by exploring independently. Saga's cruises are exclusively for those aged 50+; a travelling companion may be aged 40+. This is not a brochure. Terms and conditions apply, please see saga.co.uk/cruises for details. **NHA-CC2214.**



Winner

TITAN TRAVEL

With its superb range of cruise holidays, exceptional customer service and award-winning VIP door-to-door Home Departure Service, Titan has proved to be very popular with you over the past year.

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SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

Highly Commended

IGLU CRUISE

You praised Iglu Cruise for its great deals, superb customer service and personal approach, along with its fantastic cruise itineraries across destinations from Alaska to the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

IGLU CRUISE



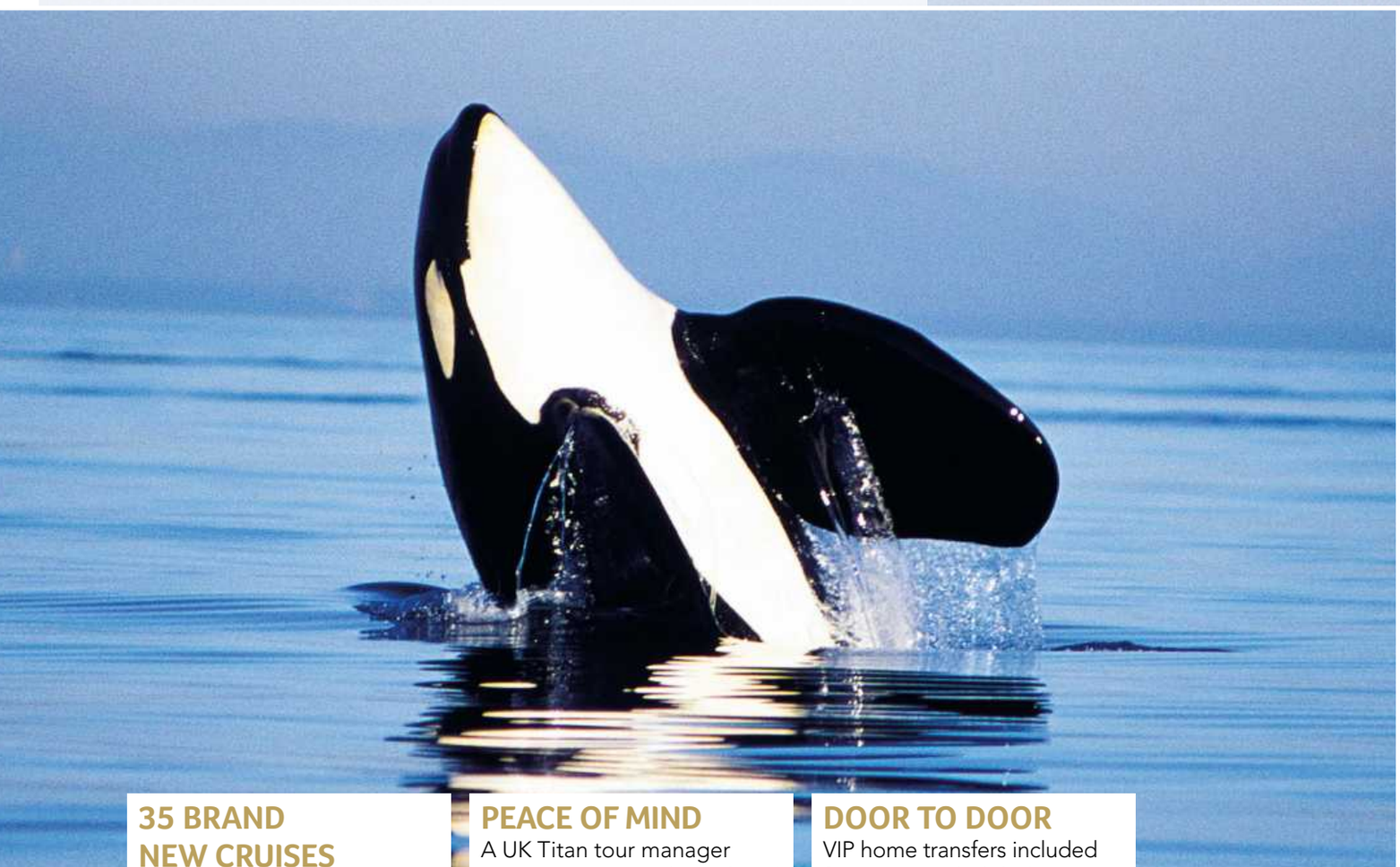
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Terms and Conditions apply on some offers.

†*Exceptions apply.*

**Except Scottish Islands and Sark, where vehicle access is restricted - we invite those residents to nominate a mainland address for their pick-up. The majority of Titan's VIP Home Departure Service® transfers are not exclusive to one holiday booking and journeys to and from the airport may be undertaken via additional addresses.*

EUROPEAN *jewel*

Discover the rivers of Europe on board award-winning luxury ship S.S. Maria Theresa with Titan Travel and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection





One of the most luxurious river cruise lines in the world, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection boasts a fleet of palatial ships along with outstanding itineraries.

Uniworld's latest masterpiece, the beautiful 150-guest *S.S. Maria Theresa*, named after the Austrian Empress, was crowned Best New River Ship at this year's *Cruise International* Awards.

S.S. Maria Theresa's interiors are inspired by the Baroque period over which the Empress presided. From the dramatic sweeping marble staircase with hand-gilded balustrade to panelled walls and antique mirrors, every inch shimmers with glamour.

Next spring, *S.S. Maria Theresa* will sail along the Rhine, through the Netherlands and Belgium, for its *Tulips and Windmills* cruise, and on regular dates from April until November it will cruise three of Europe's great rivers – the Danube, Main and Rhine – during its *European Jewels* tour from Budapest to Amsterdam.

Begin and end your travels stress-free with Titan Travel's award-winning VIP Home Departure Service, saving you the hassle and expense of travelling to the airport yourself, with no fuel or parking costs. A chauffeur driven car will collect you from your home address and whisk you to the airport, returning you home again after your cruise, in total comfort, allowing you to sit back and relax.





TULIPS AND WINDMILLS

Following your flight, board the exquisite *S.S. Maria Theresa* in Amsterdam before visiting the Van Gogh Museum, home to the largest collection of his paintings in the world. Later, explore the extraordinary Keukenhof botanical garden, a 70-acre showcase of over seven million vivid flowers. In Hoorn, your guide will explain the markings on medieval buildings that denote the former inhabitants' trades, and in Nijmegen visit the Kröller-Müller Museum. Cruise to Rotterdam's busy harbour, the third-largest port in the world, and explore the city at your own pace, before sailing to Kinderdijk, where you'll encounter 19 incredibly well preserved UNESCO-designated windmills dating back to the 1500s. Later, cruise the canals of Bruges, or explore Ghent, one of the oldest cities in Belgium. In Antwerp, visit the Cathedral of Our Lady, before transferring to Brussels airport for your flight back to the UK, where you will be met and guided to your Titan vehicle for the journey home.

10-day cruises depart on 6 and 15 April 2016 and start from £3,049pp (book by 31 December 2015 and save up to £350pp).

EUROPEAN JEWELS

Fly from London to Budapest and board *S.S. Maria Theresa* before exploring the city with a visit to Károlyi Garden. Cruise the Danube with scenic sailings through Hungary and Slovakia, arriving at Austrian capital Vienna, where you can visit the Gustav Klimt exhibit at the Belvedere Palace. Next, cruise the Wachau Valley and sample local schnapps in the village of Weissenkirchen. In medieval Regensburg, visit a farm to learn about hops cultivation and beer making. Cruise the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal to Nuremberg and later wander the streets of Bamberg. In Miltenberg, discover Wertheim's historic centre, before heading to the Spielmann wine estate. Explore some of Europe's most beautiful Renaissance castle ruins in Heidelberg, and later visit Cologne's gothic cathedral. Finally, arriving in Amsterdam, transfer to the airport and fly to London where you will be met by your Titan vehicle for the journey home.

15-day cruises depart regularly from 24 April 2016 and start from £4,199pp (book by 31 December 2015 and save up to £450pp).

Go online: Visit the website at **titantravel.co.uk/uniworld** or call **0800 988 5175** for more information.

YOUR CRUISE ON BOARD *S.S. MARIA THERESA* INCLUDES:

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- All gratuities on board and on shore.
- Unlimited onboard drinks, including Champagne, fine wine, beer, spirits, soft drinks, speciality coffee, tea and mineral water (except premium wine and premium spirits).
- All onboard meals, all freshly prepared to an exceptionally high standard.
- Shore excursions in the company of local English-speaking expert guides.
- Complimentary culinary experiences, including Captain's Welcome, Farewell Receptions and Gala Dinners.
- All entertainment plus signature lectures.
- Award-winning service, with the highest staff-to-guest ratio in the industry.
- All transfers, airport taxes, security charges, fuel surcharges and UK Air Passenger Duty (APD).

WINNER Cruise International AWARDS 2015
UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISE COLLECTION S.S. MARIA THERESA

WINNER Cruise International AWARDS 2015
TITAN TRAVEL
BEST CRUISE AGENT

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SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

BEST BOUTIQUE CRUISE LINE



Winner

SEABOURN CRUISE LINE

You crowned Seabourn as your favourite boutique cruise line because of its excellent service, extravagant dining and sumptuous staterooms. Seabourn's three ships, *Odyssey*, *Sojourn* and *Quest*, are luxurious and elegant yet relaxed and casual. The cruise line's newest ship, *Encore*, due to launch late next year, will be Seabourn's largest.



Highly Commended

VIKING OCEAN CRUISES

Christened earlier this year in its homeport of Bergen, Norway, Viking's first ocean cruise ship, the enchanting *Viking Star*, with its infinity pool, LivNordic spa and spectacular Scandinavian inspired interiors, has made big waves this year – and will be joined by sister ship *Viking Sea* next spring.

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BEST NEW SHIP (RIVER)



Winner

S.S. MARIA THERESA, UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISE COLLECTION

Uniworld's palatial *S.S. Maria Theresa* won you over with its sumptuous staterooms and unique touches, including the fabulous 'snow' Bar du Leopard, adorable cinema, beautifully appointed staterooms (including underfloor heating in the bathrooms) and the splendid swimming pool, with the pièce de résistance the stylish Habsburg Salon.

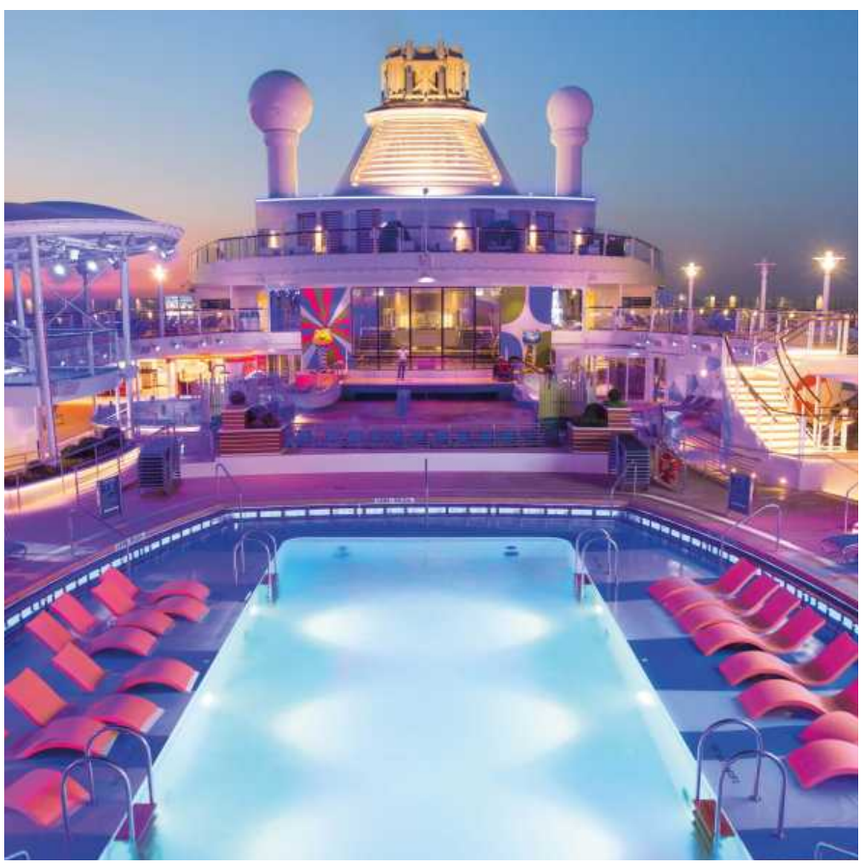


Highly Commended

EMERALD DAWN, EMERALD WATERWAYS

The fourth ship in Emerald's contemporary fleet offers bright, airy interiors and stylish, spacious staterooms, with every modern comfort at your fingertips.





Winner

BRITANNIA, P&O CRUISES

Named by HM The Queen in March 2015, and boasting Union Flag livery, P&O Cruises' fabulous new ship, *Britannia*, is already a modern British classic. You were wowed by its contemporary interiors, luxurious Oasis Spa and restaurants offering menus designed by the celebrity 'Food Heroes'.

Highly Commended

ANTHEM OF THE SEAS, ROYAL CARIBBEAN

The second ship in Royal Caribbean's Quantum class, *Anthem of the Seas*' imaginative spaces and luxurious staterooms have proved to be a big hit.

Britannia RULES THE WAVES

Awarded Best New Ocean Ship at the Cruise International Awards 2015, P&O Cruises Britannia gives passengers an exceptional holiday experience

If you're looking for a cruise ship that offers the very best of British design, hospitality, food and entertainment, then P&O Cruises *Britannia* has everything you need for a truly memorable holiday.

From the moment you step on board and into the spectacular atrium with its Star Burst chandelier, you're in a glamorous, contemporary setting, with cutting edge design and every possible comfort.

At the core of *Britannia*'s exceptional on board experience are the Food Heroes: celebrity chefs James Martin, Marco Pierre White, Eric Lanlard and Atul Kochhar, along with wine guru Olly Smith, have created a tantalising range of menus to suit all taste buds and also give masterclasses and hosted dinners in The Cookery Club, a state-of-the-art haven for foodies.





ON BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

A choice of swimming pools and lounge areas make it easy to relax on board *Britannia*. You'll find every convenience in your cabin, too, including tea and coffee making facilities thoughtfully provided. Décor throughout is elegant, modern and sumptuous.

Of course there's a wide range of places to eat too, including The Market Café, where you can treat yourself to some seriously fabulous food, including fine cheeses, breads, antipasto, charcuterie, tapas and light snacks, as well as French-style pâtisserie; plus speciality restaurants including Atul Kochhar's Sindhu.

And if you fancy indulging in some retail therapy, you'll find fragrance, jewellery, fashion, watches and leather goods in their fabulous shops.

ENTERTAINMENT

From *Strictly Come Dancing*-themed cruises and the chance to show off your Pasadoble or Cha Cha Cha in front of the stars of the hit BBC show, to dazzling performances in Headliners Theatre, a cruise on Britannia offers incredible entertainment.

Indulge in an evening at intimate supper club The Limelight Club, where you can enjoy spine-tingling performances by legendary singers, including Kiki Dee and Jaki Graham, enhanced by an atmospheric meal; dine at The Epicurean, where you'll be taken on a gastronomic journey to the very heart of fine dining; or sample the incredible array of beers, ales and ciders sourced from 53 counties of the UK at Brodie's.





FUN FOR FAMILIES

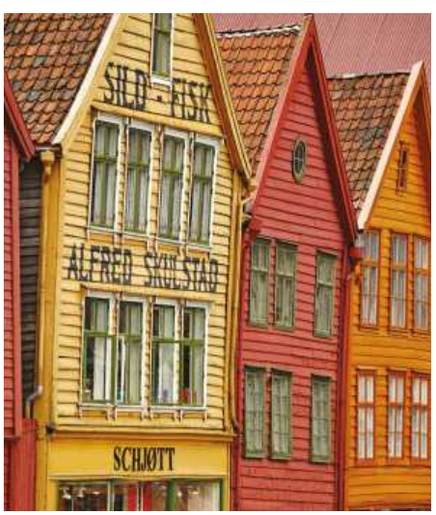
With dedicated children's clubs for ages 2-17, your children will have an incredible time. And while they're being looked after, you can relax with a glass of bubbly and some chocolate-dipped strawberries by the whirlpool at The Oasis Villa, part of *Britannia*'s luxurious spa retreat.

AMAZING ITINERARIES

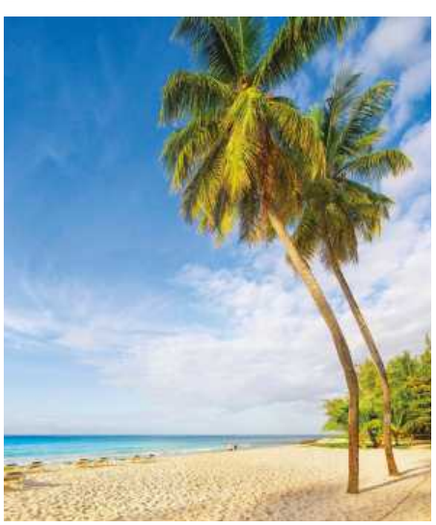
From the Caribbean to the Norwegian Fjords, the Canary Islands to the Mediterranean, there's a wonderful choice of itineraries to choose from. With outstanding excursions available in every port, every day brings a new adventure.

Cruises on board *Britannia* are brilliant value, too. A balcony cabin on an Iberia itinerary, for example, starts from £899pp* (based on cruise B612), or if you fancy a winter Caribbean fly-cruise, balcony prices start from £1,249pp* based on cruise B635C.

And with balcony cabins on a short break from Southampton to Belgium starting from just £299pp* based on cruise B607, there's simply no better time to book a cruise on board Britannia.









Go online: For more information or to make a booking, visit the website at **pocruises.com** or call **0843 374 0111**. Calls cost 3p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.

P&O CRUISES

Cruise Awards 2015 Winner – Britannia Best New Ship (Ocean)

*SELECT PRICES SHOWN ARE PER PERSON BASED ON TWO ADULTS SHARING THE LOWEST AVAILABLE GRADE OF BALCONY CABIN AND ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

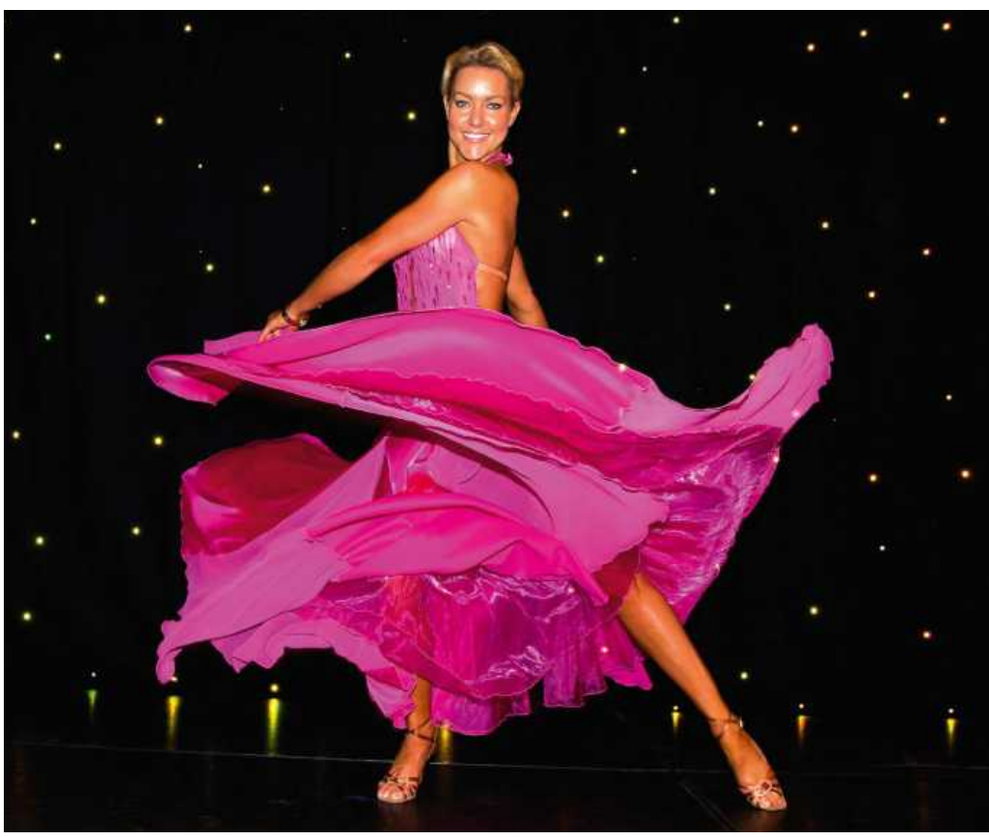
BEST FOR ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT



Winner

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

You love experiencing Norwegian's dazzling range of bars and lounges (including the Ice Bar), intimate cabaret and lavish stage shows, including *Legally Blonde* and *Rock of Ages*, and, of course, casinos.



Highly Commended

P&O CRUISES

From its hit *Strictly Come Dancing*-themed cruises, featuring regular appearances from stars including Craig Revel Horwood, to its stage shows, tribute bands and film screenings, you felt P&O Cruises give excellent entertainment value.





THAT'S entertainment

With an exciting range of cool bars, glitzy nightclubs, live music and world class productions, it's no wonder Norwegian Cruise Line was named Best Cruise Line for Onboard Entertainment at the Cruise International Awards

If there's one thing that has made Norwegian Cruise Line stand out over the past 50 years, it's innovation. It was, for example, the first cruise line to have its own private tropical island; the first cruise line to offer a genuine ice bar on a ship; and it also pioneered supervised kids' activity programmes.

Along with numerous bars and lounges on board each of its ships, live entertainment is another area where Norwegian Cruise Line has pushed the boundaries of holidays at sea. From world class Broadway and West End shows, such as *Rock of Ages*, *Legally Blonde* and *Million Dollar Quartet*, to brand new dinner-and-show concepts including *Cirque Dreams and Dinner* and *For the Record: The Brat Pack, Live at the Supper Club*, Norwegian Cruise Line continues to delight its guests with fresh, contemporary and popular entertainment experiences.

Rehearsals for Norwegian Cruise Line's spectaculars take place at its dedicated facility in Florida. Norwegian Creative Studios is a workspace where creative talents from around the world develop new innovative shows. From soaring acrobats in *Elements* to a revolving showgirl staircase in *Paradis*, Norwegian Cruise Line's award-winning entertainment is customised for every itinerary.

NORWEGIAN EPIC

Currently sailing the western Mediterranean from its homeport Barcelona, *Norwegian Epic* has brand new entertainment in the form of musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, dance extravaganza *Burn the Floor*, with its heart-pounding music and breathtaking moves, and music venue The Cavern Club, playing the classic sounds of the Beatles and the best of British pop. *Norwegian Epic* also has 20 different bars and lounges to choose from, including the Miami-inspired Posh Beach Club and outdoor nightclub Spice H2O.

NORWEGIAN ESCAPE

Not to be outdone, Norwegian Cruise Line's latest ship – the 4,200-guest *Norwegian Escape*, which launched in October and homeports in Miami, offers its own twist on fantastic entertainment. Along with Norwegian Cruise Line's acclaimed dinner-and-show *For The Record: The Brat Pack at The Supper Club*, guests can choose from musicals *After Midnight*, showcasing the songs of Duke Ellington and a roof-raising onstage jazz band, and Tony Award winning *Million Dollar Quartet*. Other live options include the sensational *Howl at the Moon*, a rousing rock 'n' roll dueling piano show, and Headliner's Comedy Club, offering several hilarious gigs per week. *Norwegian Escape* also boasts a brand new venue, the Skyline Bar, where you can savour delicious signature cocktails – perfect for a post-show nightcap.

Visit the website **ncl.co.uk** or call **0845 201 8900** for more information.

NCL NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE®

WINNER Cruise International AWARDS 2015
NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE
BEST FOR ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT

BEST DESTINATION EUROPE



Winner

NORWAY

With its breathtaking landscapes, spectacular waterfalls and wild coastline, it's little wonder that Norway was named Best Destination for the second year running. Whether it's the charming coastal city of Bergen, the pretty village of Flam, the dramatic fjords or chasing the northern lights, Norway is a superb cruise destination.

Highly Commended

VENICE

One of the most visited cities in the world, you love the city of water, its stunning architecture, iconic waterways, Grand Canal and beautiful landmarks including the Rialto Bridge and St Mark's Basilica – plus of course the food.







Winner

ALASKA

Famous for its majestic glaciers, snow capped peaks and incredible wildlife, the US state is proving increasingly popular with cruise guests, offering a diverse range of experiences and of course the opportunity to go whale and bear-watching.

Highly Commended

HAWAII

You love this collection of stunning islands, known for its fusion of rugged cliffs, serene beaches, waterfalls and exotic lagoons, Hawaii offers some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world.



Winner

OCEANIA CRUISES

With its exquisite Canyon Ranch SpaClubs, state-of-the-art fitness centres, thalassotherapy pools, as well as restorative steam room sessions and healthy dining options, you decided that Oceania Cruises excels in the art of wellbeing.



Highly Commended

MSC CRUISES

MSC's Aurea spas offer a wealth of invigorating treatments, from Balinese massage to reflexology, sea salt peeling and more. Devoted to peace and rejuvenation, MSC's onboard saunas and whirlpools allow you to drift away into a quiet world of calm and relaxation. ▸▸

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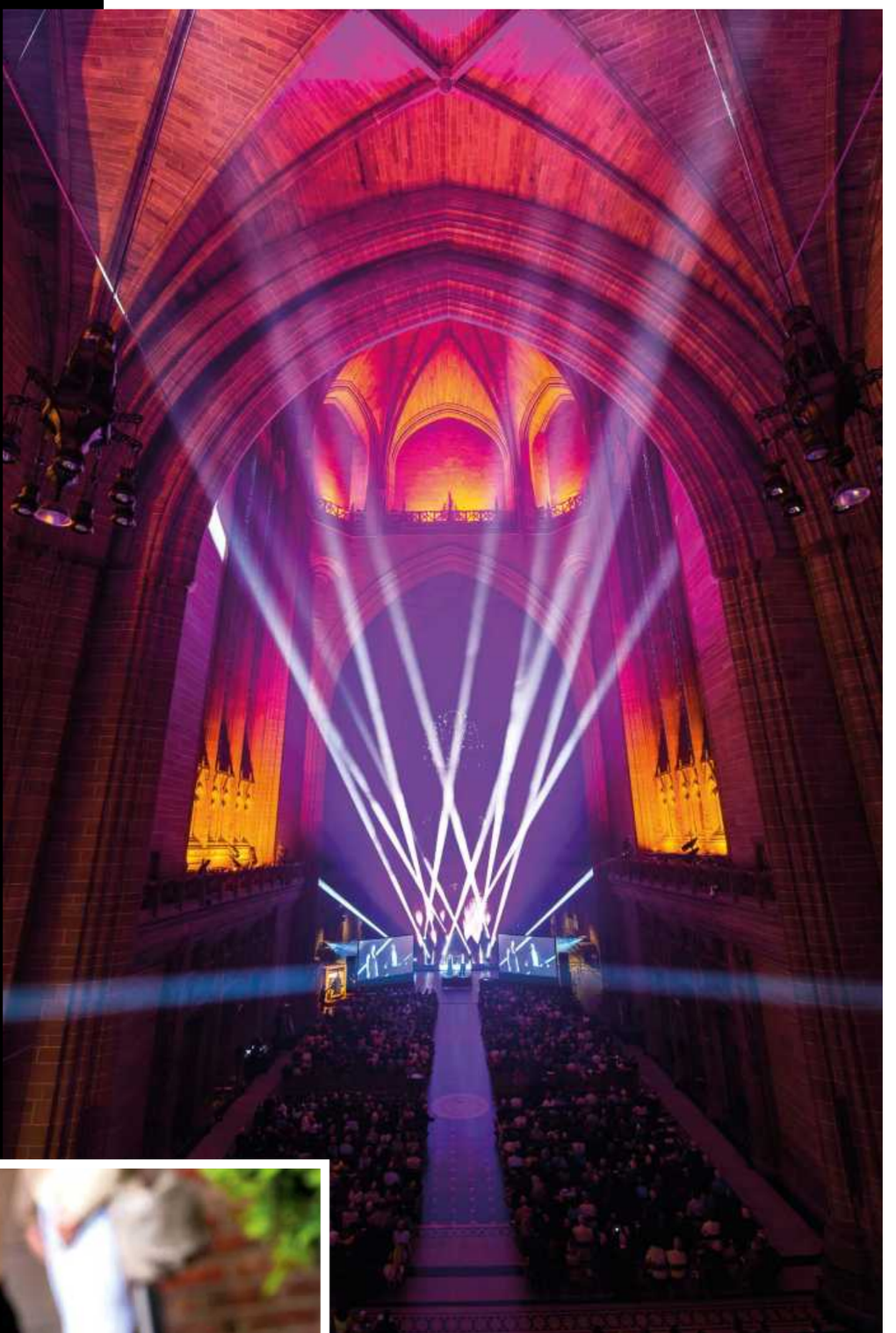
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Winner

AZAMARA'S AZAMAZING EVENINGS

Known for pioneering the 'destination immersion' experience with its range of itineraries enabling you to spend longer in ports of call, you were particularly impressed by Azamara's exclusive AzAmazing Evenings, which give guests an authentic taste of local culture.





Highly Commended

HOME DEPARTURE SERVICE

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WINNER
Cruise International AWARDS 2015

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BEST FOR FIRST-TIME CRUISERS





Winner

PRINCESS CRUISES

You were impressed by Princess Cruises' warm and welcoming approach to first-timers, easy to understand (and flexible) booking system and range of itineraries to suit all tastes.

Highly Commended

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

Norwegian's Freestyle Cruising concept was a big hit with those of you who went on your first cruise in 2015, allowing you to plan your own schedule, dine where and when you want, and dress as you please.

BEST BLOGGER





Highly Commended

ENGLISHMUM.COM

Known for her friendly, informative style, Becky Wiggins offers firsthand accounts of cruise experiences to a legion of loyal followers on social media.

Winner

TIPSFORTRAVELLERS.COM

You were impressed by the in depth cruise advice and reviews Gary Bembridge offers, as well as his '60-Second Cruise Tips' and informative weekly podcasts.





Winner

DISNEY CRUISE LINE

Disney's four stunning vessels – *Magic*, *Wonder*, *Dream* and *Fantasy* – provide state-of-the-art comforts and endless fun and entertainment, with regular appearances by Disney characters around the ship, Broadway-quality shows that appeal to the whole family and itineraries that take all ages into account, plus kids' clubs that are so good, your children will never want to leave.

Highly Commended

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL

Royal Caribbean's fleet of ships – 23 in total, with two due for 2016 (*Ovation of the Seas* and *Harmony of the Seas*) – are some of the most family friendly vessels at sea, and their kids' clubs are incredibly well-thought out.

BEST FOR ADVENTURE



Winner

VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

Small but perfectly formed (their delightful ship *Voyager* has capacity for just 540 guests), Voyages of Discovery is a big hit with you for its itineraries calling at off-the-beaten-track destinations and excellent range of immersive experiences in destinations including Cuba, Guatemala, Iceland and Athens.



Highly Commended

CELEBRITY CRUISES

You were impressed by Celebrity's wide range of exhilarating excursions in its ports of call around the globe, from driving a Ferrari along the French Riviera to flying in a floatplane over Alaska's unspoiled wilderness.

HAMMAMAS

OUT OF THE BLUE

THE TRULY CLEVER COTTON TOWEL

Hammamas premium cotton towels are as light as a feather and pack down much smaller than a normal towel. They dry you quickly yet are themselves quick-drying, making them perfect for life at sea.

Practical and stylish, Hammamas can be worn as a sarong, beach dress or wrap and they come in a waterproof pouch.

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HAMMAMAS.COM



Winner

PRINCESS CRUISES

With specialty restaurants Sabatini's, famous for its signature pasta dishes, and the Crown Grill, which serves aged steaks and grilled lobster, along with decadent Chocolate Journeys led by master chocolatier Norman Love, it's no surprise you voted the food on board Princess Cruises ships as simply superb.



Highly Commended

P&O CRUISES

P&O's eclectic collection of restaurants, including Atul Kochhar's Sindhu and Marco Pierre White's fine dining venues, along with onboard appearances by the likes of Mary Berry and Eric Lanlard (see recipes, page 22) all helped garner your votes.





Winner

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL

From the thrilling North Star sky pod, dodgems and iFly skydiving simulator on their Quantum Class ships, as well as the FlowRider, climbing walls and ice-rink, Royal Caribbean ships are bursting with activities for adrenaline junkies. You were impressed with the range and quality of activities available.

Highly Commended

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

You loved Norwegian's multi-story aqua park waterslides, rock climbing walls, ropes course, sports courts and its Plank.



Winner

VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY

Along with their itineraries that give you the opportunity to discover World Heritage sites, sacred cities and some of the most incredible wildlife in the world, you love Voyages to Antiquity's brilliant onboard lectures featuring well-known experts in their field.



Highly Commended

PRINCESS CRUISES

The Discovery at Sea programme has proved to be a massive success on Princess' cruises, offering the opportunity to try everything from unique access-all-areas experiences to swimming with turtles.



MIKAEL KRAFFT, STAR CLIPPERS

The Outstanding Contribution to the Cruise Industry award is the only Cruise Award decided by our panel of judges; this year's worthy recipient was Mikael Krafft of Star Clippers.

As a boy growing up in Stockholm, Mikael dreamed of owning a tall ship, but it wasn't until 1987 that he was finally able to start making his childhood dream a reality, and Star Clippers was born. Aided by the White Star Group and a trusted team of experienced naval architects and engineers, the first new clipper ship in 90 years was successfully designed.

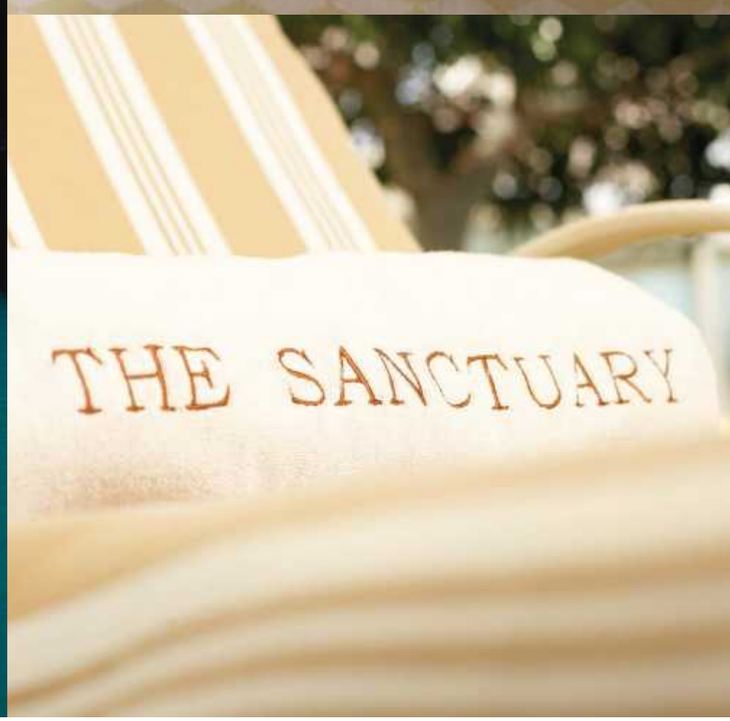
Construction began in 1990 at the Belgium Shipbuilders Corporation yard at Ghent. The result was *Star Flyer*, a 360-foot sailing ship that launched in May 1991. A year later, *Star Clipper*, its identical twin, was launched and gave Mikael Krafft his long-awaited fleet. Today, Star Clippers operates three tall ships, the 170-passenger *Star Flyer*, a four-mast sailing ship; sister ship, *Star Clipper*; and the 227-passenger *Royal Clipper*. Star Clippers has begun construction on what will be the largest square-rigged sailing ship in the world. The new vessel, the fourth ship in the Star Clippers fleet, is expected to launch mid-2017.

Win a Princess cruise for two

You and a guest could be joining Emerald Princess for a fabulous no-fly cruise from Southampton









Imagine sailing along Spain's northern coast to picturesque southern France, discovering the gastronomy and culture of this wonderful region along the way.

We've teamed up with Princess Cruises to give one lucky *Cruise International* reader and their guest the chance to win a fabulous cruise on *Emerald Princess*.

Your holiday begins with the comfort of a UK departure from Southampton. Once on board, your journey will begin with the first day spent at sea, giving you the chance to explore the wonders of the ship. Whether you choose to relax in the Sanctuary, sip cocktails on the top deck while enjoying Movies Under the Stars, the largest outdoor cinema at sea, there are a wealth of experiences on offer, and with the new partnership between Princess Cruises and celebrity chef Curtis Stone their cuisine is first-class.

After sailing south, your first port of call is La Coruna. Soaked in natural beauty, it's easy to lose yourself exploring the cobbled streets of the Old Town. Staying in Spain, *Emerald*'s next stop is Bilbao. Perched on the hills of the Nervión River, Bilbao is a thriving port and the heart of Spain's Basque Country. Enjoy the soulful character of the city while immersing yourself in its culture and excitement.

The final stop, before another day at sea, will be in southwest France. Lying on the south bank of the Gironde estuary, Le Verdon, is arguably the finest wine-producing region in the world.

This seven-day cruise is filled with history and culture, and with two sea days it also gives a unique experience to relax, rejuvenate and come back new.

To find out more about Princess Cruises, visit princess.com or call 0843 374 2401.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS • The prize includes 7 days on board *Emerald Princess* and all meals as stated in the itinerary • The prize does not include travel to or from Southampton • All entrants must be a UK resident and aged 18 or over • Drinks are not included • The prize is non-transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash • Entries close at 11.59pm on Friday 11 December 2015 • The cruise offered is for two people sharing a minimum of BF grade Balcony Stateroom. This is subject to change at the discretion of Princess Cruises • Gratuities are included • Any other expenses incurred during the period of the prize will be the responsibility of the prize winner and their companion • No cash alternative will be offered and prizes are non-transferable and non-exchangeable • The Prize Winner will be responsible for supplying valid passports and, where necessary, for obtaining appropriate vaccinations and inoculations. It is strongly recommended that travellers take out adequate travel insurance • Princess Cruises cannot be responsible for unforeseen cancellations • Princess reserves the right to substitute an alternative cruise of a similar value due to any unforeseen circumstances • The holiday is ABTA and ATOL protected • No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost, delayed or incomplete • Entry constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions • The usual Chelsea Magazine Company competition rules apply. These can be viewed at chelseamagazines.com/terms-and-conditions

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How to enter: For your chance to win a fabulous holiday with Princess Cruises, simply answer the following question, then complete and send this form to the address below. All entries must be received by 11.59pm on Friday 11 December 2015.

What is the name of Princess' new celebrity chef?

- ☐ A **Curtis Stone**
- ☐ B **Curtis Diamond**
- ☐ C **Curtis Rock**

Name:

Address

Telephone: Email:

Send your coupon to: Princess Competition, Cruise International, The Chelsea Magazine Company, Jubilee House, 2 Jubilee Place, London SW3 3TQ, UK

By entering the competition, you agree and acknowledge that The Chelsea Magazine Company and Princess Cruises are permitted to receive your registration data. Please tick if you subscribe to *CRUISE INTERNATIONAL* magazine ☐ Please tick if you do NOT wish to be sent information about products and services from The Chelsea Magazine Company or Princess Cruises by phone, post or email ☐ Terms & Conditions apply (see box left).

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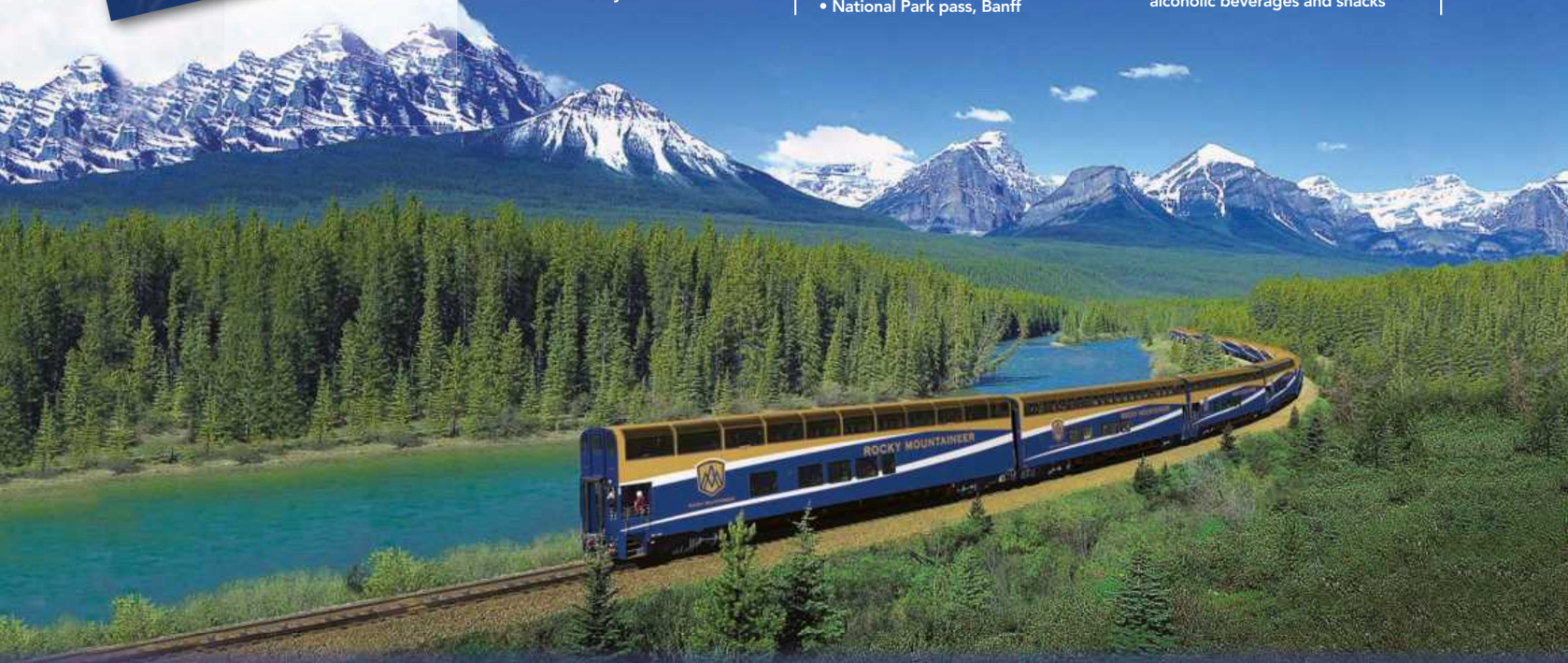
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ANIMAL magic

From whales and dolphins to lions and bears, a cruise is a fantastic way to see some of the most magnificent species on the planet. **Deborah Stone** chooses six of the best itineraries for the year ahead

Sleepy koala at Brisbane's Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary

Australia

Scuba-diving or snorkelling the waters of the Great Barrier Reef will yield all sorts of underwater treasures, from tropical fish to turtles and, of course, spectacular coral. In the nearby Whitsunday Islands you'll also see dolphins, stingray and sharks. If you want to get up close to something a little more cuddly, then visit Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary near Brisbane, the world's first and largest koala sanctuary. Although there are some koalas and kangaroos that are visitor-friendly, most are wild animals so this is as authentic an experience as a one-day stop will allow.

GETTING THERE: Oceania Cruises offers a 34-day *Southern Cross Sojourn* cruise on new ship *Sirena* from £6,059pp (a free air fare offer should be available until the ship is full), departing 6 March 2016 (oceaniacruises.com/0345 505 1920).

South Africa

The chance to explore South Africa has a special attraction for animal lovers. Yes, you will see natural splendours, such as Table Mountain outside Cape Town and the scenic but also botanically legendary Garden Route outside Mossel Bay, yet nothing beats the sight of elephants, lions, leopards, rhino and giraffes in their natural habitat. Hluhluwe Game Reserve, accessible from Richards Bay, for instance, has all these plus cheetah, leopard, zebra and wildebeest, while Addo Elephant Park, about 45 miles from Port Elizabeth, is a sanctuary for 450 elephants as well as Cape buffalo, black rhino and antelope.

GETTING THERE: Voyages to Antiquity offers a 14-day *Games Parks of South Africa* cruise, including return flights, transfers and excursions, departing 4 January 2016, from £2,995pp, based on two people sharing (voyagestoantiquity.com; 01865 302 550).

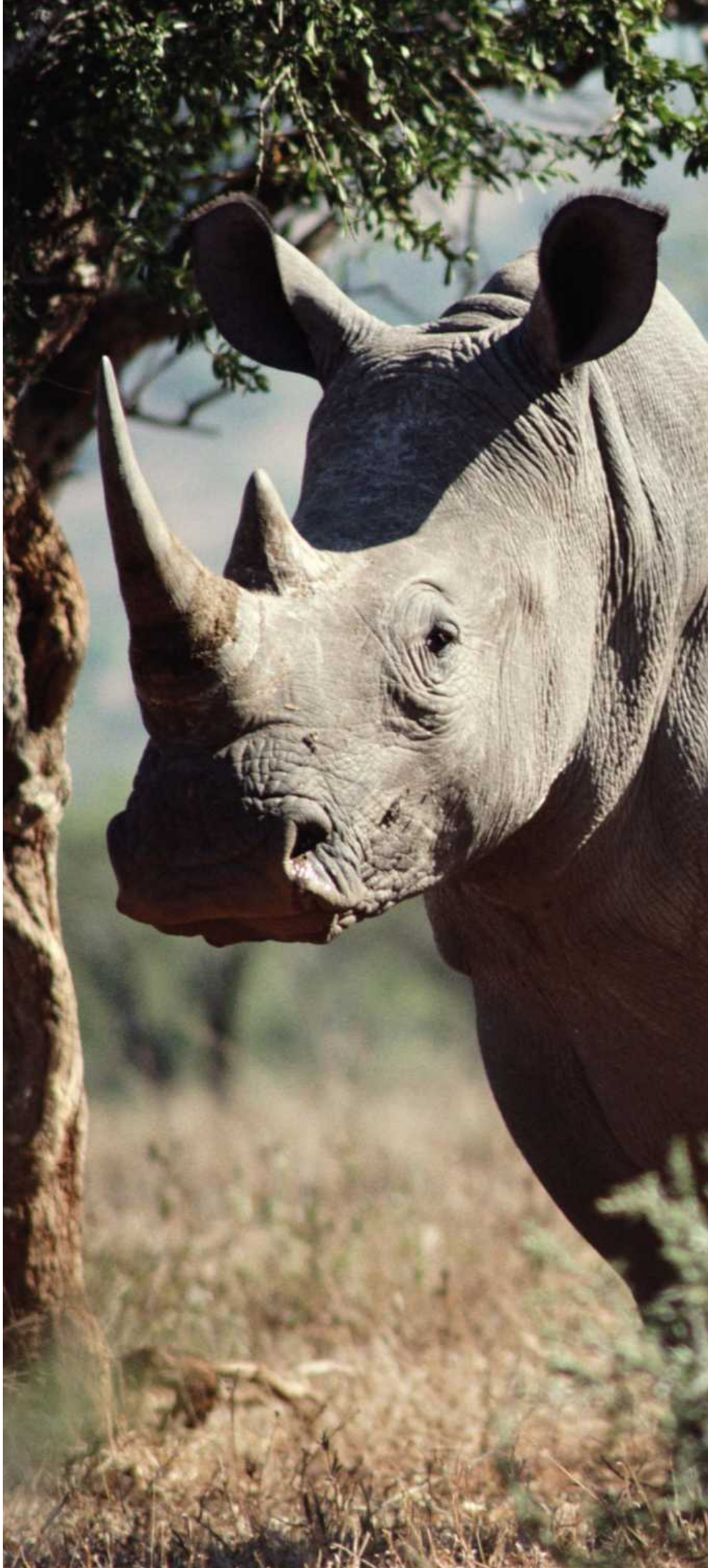


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A white rhinoceros at
Hluhluwe Game Reserve



A lynx hiding in the bushes at Alaska's Denali National Park

Alaska

While the Arctic offers isolation, the wilds of Alaska are conveniently close to Canada, which gives you the option of adding a land-based stay to the typical seven-night cruise past Alaska's icebergs and glaciers. The classic itinerary through the Inside Passage should guarantee sightings of bald eagles, sea lions and porpoises. Among the whales often seen are humpback, gray, beluga and minke as well as the mighty orca or killer whale. Most Alaska cruises will include small boat excursions to get you closer to wildlife but at Ketchikan there are floatplane trips to one of Alaska's best black bear sites. There are also wolves, mountain goats, Sitka black-tailed deer and you may even catch a glimpse of a lynx. If you are spending a few days on land, the Rocky Mountaineer Train will take you through sensational scenery, forests and waterfalls with the chance of seeing herds of elk or a solitary moose.

GETTING THERE: Jetline Cruise offers a 14-night *Alaska & Rocky Mountaineer* fly-cruise from £2,739pp, departing 12 May 2016 (jetlinecruise.com).



The magnificent male frigate bird in courtship display in Barbuda

PHOTOS © DANITA DELIMONT/AWL IMAGES/JOHN CANCALOSI/GETTY IMAGES

The Caribbean

Soft white sand beaches and a backdrop of picturesque peaks – the Caribbean is a paradise for relaxation. But there's also plenty of wildlife if you look for it. The Caribbean is particularly good for birdwatchers, with the twin islands of Antigua and Barbuda home to the endangered West Indian whistling duck and Barbuda warbler. But it is the majestic frigate bird (booby) that really catches the imagination. Barbuda has 5,000 of them in its Frigate Bird Sanctuary, and it is also home to nesting sea turtles. Although cruise ships stop at Antigua rather than Barbuda, a 90-minute ferry takes you over to the smaller island, with its idyllic beaches.

GETTING THERE: Royal Caribbean offers a 7-night *Southern Caribbean* cruise from £1,201pp, including flights and transfers, departing 5 March 2016 (royalcaribbean.co.uk; 0844 571 9999).



Distinctive macaroni penguins on the Falkland Islands



PHOTOS © ROBERT HARDING PICTURE LIBRARY LTD/ALAMY/SHIN OKAMOTO/GETTY IMAGES

South America

From the stunning fjords of Chile to the fiercely independent Falkland Islands, a cruise around Cape Horn in South America reveals world class scenery but also some astonishing wildlife sights. The Falklands themselves have several types of penguins that you can get up close to with expert guides. There are inquisitive rockhoppers, regal king penguins and more retiring Magellanic and macaroni penguins. Friendly dolphins often accompany small boat trips from the island. Other wildlife highlights can include seeing black-necked swans in Puerto Chacabuco, the gateway to Chile's fjords, and at Ushuaia in Argentina the Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego has walruses as well as seals and seabirds.

GETTING THERE: Norwegian Cruise Line offers a 16-night *South America From Buenos Aires* fly-cruise from £2,234pp, departing 26 February 2016 including return flights from LHR (ncl.co.uk; 0845 201 8900).



Japan

You could say Japan's archipelago of four main islands is purpose-built for cruises. Japan has a well-deserved reputation for its cultural treasures, but it is also a country full of national parks and natural splendours – from snow-capped mountains to conifer forests and waterfalls. Cruise through the dolphin-dotteds waters around Japan's north island, Hokkaido, and visit the marshes of Kushiro to see graceful red-necked cranes, the emblem of Japan, along with Hokkaido deer, white-tailed sea eagles and masses of wildflowers. The sea around Shiretoko Peninsula, on the north east side of the island, is home to several varieties of whales, and much of the peninsula is national parkland, with one of the world's biggest populations of brown bears.

GETTING THERE: Princess Cruises offers a 9-day *Hokkaido Islands* cruise departing Yokahama on 31 August 2016 from £999, flights not included (princess.com; 0843 374 4444).

Dolphins swimming in clear blue waters off the coast of Hokkaido



The Arctic hare on snow-covered rocks in Greenland

The Arctic

In the sparkling waters around Iceland you can see dolphins and seals, with sea eagles for the keen-eyed and puffins during the summer. Head further into the Arctic and there are minke, humpback and fin whales in summer and autumn, not to mention icebergs galore as you sail along the coast of Greenland; Prince Christian Sound is awash with them. You may see a lone polar bear or two in the High Arctic – the pack ice off Svalbard in summer and autumn is the best place to see them – but mountains, sea and ice are the dominant features of a High Arctic cruise. There are few signs of human life except intermittent settlements, such as the colourful houses of Uummannaq in Greenland. Sea birds fly alongside the cruise ships and you may spot birds such as the ivory gull on lumps of ice or gyrfalcon wheeling overhead. Guided walks through a landscape of stunted shrubs and watery moorlands may also bring you within sight of musk ox bulls and reindeer or white Arctic hares and silver foxes.

GETTING THERE: Titan Travel offers a 14-day *Iceland and Natural Wonders of Greenland* cruise departing Reykjavik on 26 July 2016 from £4,799 including flights and Titan's VIP Home Departure Service (titantravel.co.uk; 0808 163 7488).

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CITY GUIDE

ROME

It's the city that birthed an empire, where history and culture intertwine along every street – which makes it perfect for exploring on a cruise, says **Oliver Hughes**



From the breathtaking Renaissance architecture of St Peter's Basilica to the enchanting gardens of the Villa Borghese, Rome is quite simply one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

Roman mythology dates the foundation of Rome at 753 BC, but the sites of the 'seven hills' which form the geographical heart of the city have been occupied for much longer, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in Europe. Today it offers a heady mix of culture, history and chaos.

If it's your first visit to the Eternal City then the good news is that it's possible to see all the major sights in a day – just make sure you throw three coins in the water of the Fontana di Trevi and you're guaranteed to return to experience more of la dolce vita.

Must-sees

It's remarkably easy to walk around Rome (just be careful when you're crossing the roundabout in front of the Vittorio Emanuele II). Start at St Peter's Square in Vatican City and make your way to the Colosseum. If you get there early the queues won't be too bad and it's well worth paying the entry fee for a look at the ancient gladiatorial tunnels.

Roman ruins are everywhere. Visit the Forum, observe the ancient designs on Trajan's Column, head to the Flavian Amphitheatre, site of gladiatorial combat and the centrepiece of Roman architecture, and take a trip around the Circus Maximus – the 150,000-seat chariot racing stadium, one of the largest capacity stadia in history. There are also three triumphal arches.

The Pantheon, completed by Hadrian and dating back to AD 126 is perfectly preserved, with a spectacular dome and occulus giving a view straight up to the sky. Nearby you'll find the Piazza di Spagna (the Spanish Steps) – climb to the top and you'll be rewarded with a spectacular view.

PHOTOS: ISTOCK. MAP BY SCOTT JESSOP









If you want to see the Pope, arrive at St Peter's Square on a Sunday morning at 11am, ready for the personal appearance by 'Papa' at midday.

Sports fans should try and catch a home game of Lazio or AS Roma – both play in the Olympic stadium (the derby between the two, the Derby della Capitale, is one of the most heated in world football).

Where to eat

Pizzerias are of course dotted around everywhere (just like cafés – Italians do love their coffee). Roman pizzas are thin and crispy, but you will also find Neapolitan style eateries with the chewier dough. Sforno is one of the best of this style, while Da Remo serves the classic Roman style, alongside craft beer or wine. The Piazza Navona is always a good place to stop for a bite to eat and soak up the atmosphere while the Antico Forno Roscioli is a historic bakery that offers light snacks or a hearty lunch, prepared by one of Rome's oldest families. Roman food can be quite salty but it's absolutely delicious – for real authentic Italian food, head across the Tiber river to Trastevere – this is where the Romans go.

Shopping

Just in front of the Spanish Steps lies perhaps the most famous shopping street in Rome, the Via dei Condotti. Every designer can be found here – Prada, Gucci, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana. The area around the Spanish Steps also features local art dealers and some lovely artisan souvenir shops. The Via dei Corso offers more mass market shops but the Galleria Alberto Sordi has stylish boutiques and is a great place to enjoy a coffee. In Prati, just north of the Vatican, the Via Cola di Rienzo has a collection of more reasonably priced shops and local specialists.

Clockwise, from above left: **Vatican City viewed from the Tiber River, a Vespa; bedroom at the Jumeirah Grand Hotel Via Veneto; the Trevi Fountain; the interior of St Peter's Basilica**

ESSENTIALS

Where to stay

Loved by tennis legend Roger Federer, the elegant Jumeirah Grand Hotel Via Veneto is an art deco masterpiece close to the Villa Borghese gardens. Rooms are contemporary and stylish, and the bathrooms are particularly luxurious, with Bulgari toiletries. The spa is absolutely beautiful, offering a range of Sisley treatments, Vichy showers and a Vitality pool. Breakfast is served in the open air courtyard, and there's also a gorgeous rooftop bar where you can enjoy an aperetifo or two before heading out into the night. Superior rooms start at 236 Euros a night (jumeirah.com/Grand-Hotel-Veneto).

Getting there

Cruise ships dock at Civitavecchia, which is just over an hour outside Rome by road. You can take the train into the city, or cruise lines will often provide a shuttle bus to the city.

Go online: To read more city guides go to **cruise-international.com/category/destinations**

RIVER CRUISE News

SHIPS • EVENTS • DESTINATIONS

NEW COLLECTIONS FROM TITAN

Titan Travel, in partnership with the deluxe river cruise operator Uniworld, has released the second edition of its new 2016 river cruise brochure, with savings of up to £2,000pp on bookings made before 31 December 2015.

This second edition sees the launch of Uniworld's 'Connoisseur Collection' and 'Monarch Collection', a new range of additional excursions and events that are being offered to Uniworld passengers at no extra cost on a limited number of departures.

The Monarch Collection, available on selected *European Jewels* and *Enchanting Danube* sailings, offers insider access to Europe's rich aristocratic heritage.

The Connoisseur Collection, available on selected *Paris & Normandy*, *Bordeaux, Vineyards & Châteaux* and *Burgundy & Provence* sailings, offers experiences to delight anyone with an interest in fine food and wine.

And new for 2016 is the impressive *India's Golden Triangle and the Sacred Ganges* itinerary. Prices start from £6,049pp, saving up to £700pp if booked before 31 December 2015 (titantravel.co.uk).



Discover the Mekong

Emerald Waterways is offering Southeast Asia river cruises with the option of four different pre- and post-cruise land tours.

The 14-day *Mekong Discoverer* includes a pre-cruise tour of Vietnam, a seven-night Mekong cruise and a post-cruise tour of Cambodia, while *Highlights of Vietnam & Cambodia and Mekong* is an 18-day river and land adventure. Other itineraries include the 21-day *Vietnam & Cambodia Explorer*, and the 20-day *Mekong Discoverer*, combining tours of Vietnam and Cambodia with a seven-night Mekong cruise and three-night Thai beach stopover.

Book your Southeast Asia river cruise by 30 November 2015 and enjoy guaranteed savings of £1,000 per couple. Guests choosing any of the first three itineraries above can extend their stay with a three-night Singapore break for just £159pp (emeraldwaterways.co.uk).



FESTIVE CHEER

Explore the Christmas markets of Europe with AmaWaterways' enchanting seven-night *Christmas Markets on the Rhine* river cruise, hosted by former newsreader John Craven. Departing on 7 December from Amsterdam, guests can visit incredible festive markets in Cologne, Rüdesheim and Strasbourg as *AmaCerto* sails through Germany's Black Forest region towards Basel. Prices start from £1,849, saving £390pp (amawaterways.co.uk).



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**Early booking offer is only available on selected departures and ends on the 31 December 2015. **Standard inclusions listed; may differ slightly by operator*

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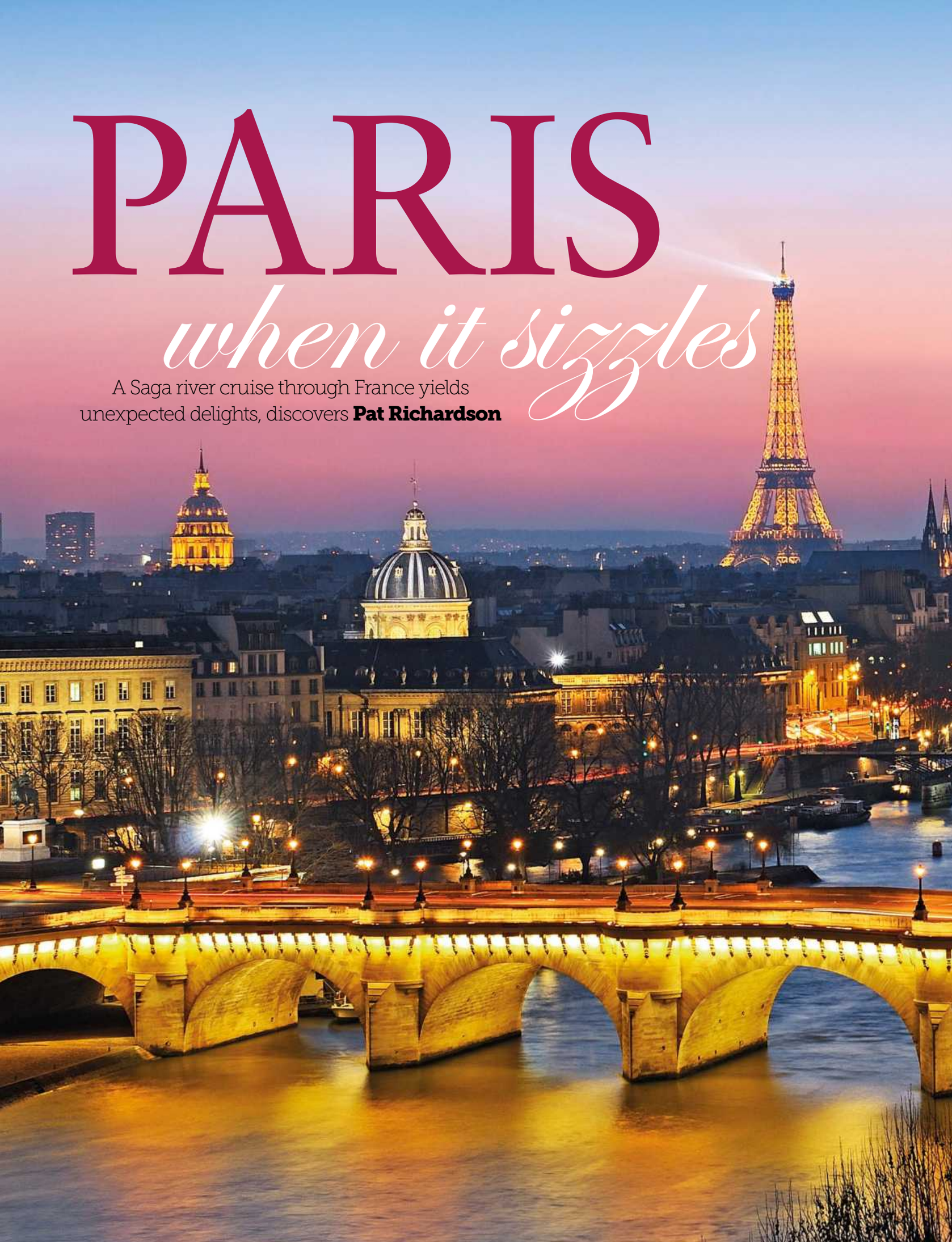


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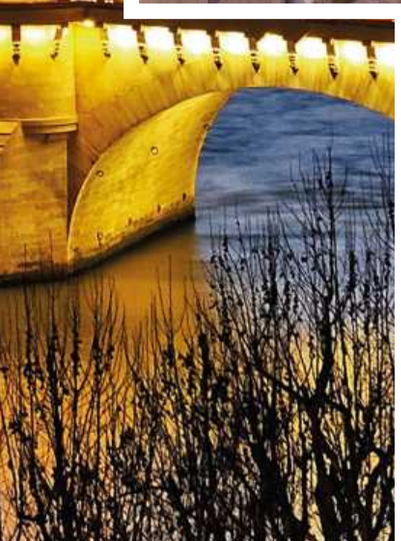
A Saga river cruise through France yields unexpected delights, discovers **Pat Richardson**











Clockwise from far left: Paris and the Seine at night; *The Bridge of Moret in 1893* by Alfred Sisley; a Moret-sur-Loing street

PHOTOS: AWL IMAGES/CORBIS

It has been a gloriously hot day in Paris, and now evening spreads a warm velvet cloak over the city. Against its soft darkness, and reflected in the rippling ribbon of the Seine, lights from bridges, buildings and the Eiffel Tower sparkle like scattered jewels. Locals and tourists are out in force all along the banks of the river, spilling out of wine bars and restaurants, strolling along bridges and in the gardens at Quai Saint-Bernard, and waving at us from the crowded top decks of dinner-cruise boats.

We wave back from our top deck, which isn't at all crowded. Like them, we are enjoying a Paris-by-night cruise, with commentary. Unlike them, we haven't joined a standing-room-only scrum up top, or fought through traffic jams to board our vessel, *Anacoluthe*. We were already on board, and making ourselves at home for the next six nights. Our dinner was served as we made our leisurely way from a mooring in the suburbs to the city centre. Our guide, who points out landmarks and relates the city's story as we sail, will be with us throughout the cruise. As we sail through the City of Light that, on this particular evening, is living up to that description in superb style, we feel very privileged. Our lounge and bar, library and dining room are just downstairs, as are our bedrooms.

Anacoluthe is appealingly intimate, with just 25 cabins and 50 passengers at most. There's air conditioning and central heating, but no lift – all decks are accessed by stairs. Complimentary wifi is available in the lounge, bar and the library – although, as on any cruise vessel, connectivity is not a given at all times.

All cabins are compact but lack none of the essentials. Beds are comfortable, with large drawers, luggage storage space below and reading lights above. There's a small bedside table, a stool, wardrobe, full length mirror and a bookshelf. Bathrooms have a walk-in shower and shelves for toiletries. Hair dryers are provided and a laundry service is available.

One deck up are the open seating dining room, the invitingly comfortable lounge and bar, the library with additional sofas and armchairs plus a good selection of books and an assortment of puzzles and board games, and a small sunroom for those seeking a quieter space. Outdoors at the bow, there's limited seating, an exercise bike and a hot tub.

Uppermost is the spacious sundeck, with its exercise bike, chairs and tables. One advantage of cruising on *Anacoluthe* is that much of the scenery you pass is south of Paris, on the upper reaches of the Seine and along some of its quiet tributaries.

At our first port of call, Melun, we board our coach for my favourite Seine excursion, to the beautiful baroque Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte. Built in the mid-1600s for Nicolas Fouquet, Louis XIV's wealthy Finance Minister, it was France's first ensemble chateau – one with architecture and landscape designed in perfect harmony. An elaborate party, hosted by Louis XIV, was held at the chateau to celebrate its completion; but Fouquet's moment of glory didn't last very long. Three weeks later, the envious King ordered his arrest on a charge of embezzlement. Although his innocence was later established, Fouquet spent the rest of his life in jail. Meanwhile, Louis XIV, the Sun King, instructed the same architect, landscape designer and painter-decorator to transform a small royal hunting lodge into something equally magnificent – the Palace of Versailles.

The next morning, we sail to the village of St Mammès, which sits at the confluence of the Seine and the serene Loing, and went to admire the walled medieval town of Moret-sur-Loing. Posters showing paintings of the town by the Impressionist Alfred Sisley, who lived there for the last 10 years of his life, are displayed in a riverside park. I found seeing them in this way a satisfying experience, akin to putting a face to a name. Later we sailed on to Montereau where another tributary, the Yonne, meets the Seine.

CHATEAU DE VAUX-LE-VICOMTE WAS FRANCE'S FIRST ENSEMBLE CHATEAU, ONE WITH ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNED IN PERFECT HARMONY



From there, next morning we followed the placid Yonne to Sens, one of the oldest cities in France. We walked to its ancient cathedral, the rebuilding of which – as one of the first Gothic cathedrals, began in 1135. It was here that Thomas à Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury later murdered by supporters of King Henry II of England, took refuge in 1164.

By now, we were in Burgundy, sailing through a picture book landscape of golden wheatfields, deep green forests and soft rolling hills. We switched to coach, but were still surrounded by stunning scenery, for the drive to Joigny to view its wealth of medieval buildings and, in an atmospheric cellar, taste local wines accompanied by a delicious savoury Burgundy speciality – gougère, choux pastry and cheese puffs.

For many, the highlight of a cruise on *Anacoluthe* is not where the captain takes you, but what its chefs put on your plate. For an old vessel with a tiny galley, *Anacoluthe* punches far above its weight when it comes to food and wine.

Breakfast is a simple but satisfying continental buffet. Lunch consists of a hot entrée, such as quiche Lorraine, plus three salads, perhaps artichoke, none of which ever make a second appearance. Dessert might be, for example, pineapple carpaccio with sorbet or chocolate tart. Dinner is four courses: a starter – vegetable tarte tatin or asparagus soup; a main – perhaps slow roasted duck leg with orange sauce and potatoes, or fillet of sea bass with white wine sauce, cauliflower and green beans. Next come three different cheeses – again, none repeated, and fully described by a specialist server. Desserts such as crème brûlée, île flottante and raspberry gateau complete the meal. Complimentary wines – selected and introduced by the sommelier, and different every time, are served with lunch and dinner. It is a gastronomic feast.

We spent our penultimate day on board sailing back to St Mammès, via several locks and narrow canals. A talk on the history and development of inland navigation, given by our onboard French guide, brought this stage of the journey into sharp and fascinating focus for us. It was the last of many interesting talks, covering French history, the Impressionist painters and our route, which greatly enriched our river cruise experience.

Afterwards we had the quiet river to ourselves, and our prow pushed gentle folds into its dark surface as we whispered past small villages that tumbled towards the water's edge. We, it seemed, had slipped into another century.





Clockwise, from far left: The grand exterior and interior of Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte, Maincy; savoury choux pastries with cheese

PHOTOS: JOHN KELLERMAN /ALAMY/CORBIS/STOCKFOOD/GARETH MORGANS

Go online: You can read a review of a Saga cruise in the Baltic on board Saga's *Pearl II* at **cruise-international.com/baltic-cruise-on-the-saga-pearl-ii**

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A WONDERFUL WEEK

We want to say a very big thank you. My partner Steve and I have just returned from the wonderful week's cruise that I won from *Cruise International*. The cruise with Hapag-Lloyd on *Europa 2* was amazing: the ship was wonderful with so many facilities, large well appointed cabins and such friendly, attentive and efficient staff.

We both felt so privileged to be able to join this cruise – it was the holiday of a lifetime, and to have the opportunity to see many interesting and beautiful places we have come home feeling not only relaxed and very happy but also feeling that we have learned so much more about the world in which we live.

Once again thank you for hosting the competition in your magazine and for a very special and memorable week. *Susan Naylor*



AMAZING TIME

I won a seven-night, round-trip cruise from Barcelona on *MSC Fantasia* with *Cruise International* and took my boyfriend, Joe. We had a fantastic time. We stopped off at Marseille; Genoa, with the fantastic La Biosfera which houses 150 species of animals and plants; Naples, from where we explored Pompeii; Messina; Valletta; and Palma de Mallorca. It really was an amazing trip and we both had a fabulous time. *Joanna Rowland*

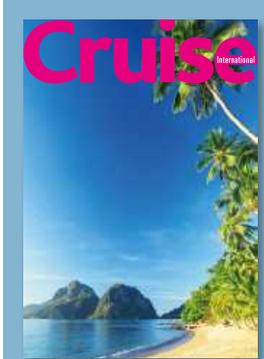
CRUISES ARE ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS

Look who has been spotted enjoying life at sea (with a bottle of Bolly, of course). Yes it's Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders, aka Patsy and Edina, filming *Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie* on the French Riviera.



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE...

ON SALE 18 DEC



*** CRUISE PLANNER 2016**

Your must-have glossy guide to the best ocean and river cruises, brand new ships and hottest destinations for the year ahead.

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THIS ISSUE'S EXPERTS



Julie Peasgood is a TV presenter, travel expert and Contributing Editor for *Cruise International*



Liz Jarvis is a well-known travel expert and the Editor of *Cruise International*



Sara Macefield is an award-winning journalist and Contributing Editor for *Cruise International*



Q I'm interested in booking a cruise to visit Cuba, and in particular visiting Havana. Which cruise lines are now offering Cuba and will I need a visa?

A. There are several cruise lines visiting Cuba, and they all include Havana as a destination. Most incorporate an overnight stay so you can fully explore the vibrant old town, with its cobbled streets, magnificent colonial architecture and vintage American cars. Thomson Cruises has a range of good value cruise and stay deals; Fred. Olsen has Cuban cruises on board both *Braemar* and *Boudicca*; Voyages of Discovery offers trips with their customary insights into Cuba's rich cultural heritage; and MSC Cruises, Swan Hellenic, Noble Caledonia and *Star Flyer* also dock in Cuba as part of longer Caribbean cruises. You will need a Tourist Visa (also known as a Tourist Card) to enter the country – the easiest way to obtain one of these is online at visacuba.com (the cost is £15 plus £10 admin and postage). Cuba is a rhythmic assault on the senses: as well as the crumbling grandeur of the cities there are expansive beaches with coral reefs, lush rainforests, art, music and fantastic mojitos – I had a holiday there I will never forget. The best time to visit is from December to May. And take things to give away if you can – schoolchildren are desperate for pens, pencils and notebooks, and adults are very grateful for any cosmetics. Julie Peasgood

Q I'm confused by the variety of onboard gratuity policies – to avoid a big final bill, should I choose an all-inclusive cruise, or should I pay the gratuities in advance?

A. Paying gratuities in advance is a good way of budgeting and prevents any nasty surprises at the end of the cruise. Of the mainstream cruise lines, only Thomson Cruises includes gratuities in the overall price, while others, such as Crystal Cruises and Seabourn, are luxury all-inclusive lines. Cultural cruise companies Swan Hellenic and Voyages to Antiquity also include tips, as do some river cruise lines. Opting for these means you won't have to pay the daily charge, which on US lines tends to be about $13 per person per day, and on UK lines average at around £4. Cruise lines also stress that if you don't want to pay the charge, and instead tip cruise staff personally, you can ask to opt out; and you may want to tip extra for particularly good service. Sara Macefield



Q I'm really not a ball gown type of person. What should I wear on formal night?

A: Relax. I don't think there's any cruise line that would force you to wear a ball gown on formal night. What I love about these evenings, though, is that it is a chance to dress up and feel glamorous. If you don't want to go long, then a cocktail dress with a pair of sparkly earrings and heels will be fine. If dresses really aren't your thing, then a smart pair of trousers (not jeans) with a pretty top and maybe a silk scarf, or a plain jumpsuit dressed up with accessories, will also work. The most important thing is that you feel comfortable, because it is your holiday. Liz Jarvis



PHOTOS: ISTOCK/ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL/CELEBRITY CRUISES

THE INSIDER



Our regular column from Andy Harmer, Director of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) UK & Ireland

What a great occasion the recent *Cruise International* Awards 2015 were – a wonderful celebration of the many different aspects of cruising. I was delighted to present the Awards with actress and TV presenter Julie Peasgood, herself an avid cruise fan, and we were both impressed by the diversity of the nominations.

I was particularly interested in the two Best Destination awards – Europe and World – and it seems that this year it was 'cool' cruising that came out tops, with Norway and Alaska being chosen respectively. And having been fortunate enough to visit both destinations, I can attest to their breathtaking beauty, stunning scenery and wildlife. Alaska in particular brings back amazing memories of sailing from the beautiful city of Vancouver calling at some great wilderness towns and the incredible Inside Passage.

And as we now head towards our own cooler months, no doubt many of us will be looking to our next holiday, mulling over cruise brochures featuring many amazing places to visit in 2016 and 2017.

One of those locations is Cuba, which is now opening up as a cruise destination, changing Caribbean itineraries forever. There have been a number of announcements recently from cruise lines with plans to feature the island, and with a huge pent up demand I can imagine that Cuba will be firmly placed on the cruise map.

April 2016 will see the introduction of Fathom, a new cruise line using the wonderful P&O Cruises ship *Adonia*. The brand is offering guests the opportunity to become involved in another culture and work alongside its people on community projects. This is an ambitious programme that aims to offer great holidays while doing some important community work in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Next year will also see 11 brand new ocean cruise ships joining the worldwide fleet including a long awaited ship for Regent Seven Seas – and if the literature is anything to go by, it certainly seems the wait has been worthwhile. Dubbed 'the most luxurious ship ever built', *Seven Seas Explorer* offers the highest space ratios and staff-to-guest ratios in the cruise industry. Putting this into perspective, the cost of this 738-passenger ship is more than a ship launching with 2,500 guests. I'd better start saving.

There are also more than 20 river ships being introduced next year onto the world's rivers and waterways and these too are very innovative, with new alternative dining spaces, fitness rooms, spas, swimming pools, cinemas and interconnecting cabins being added for larger family groups.

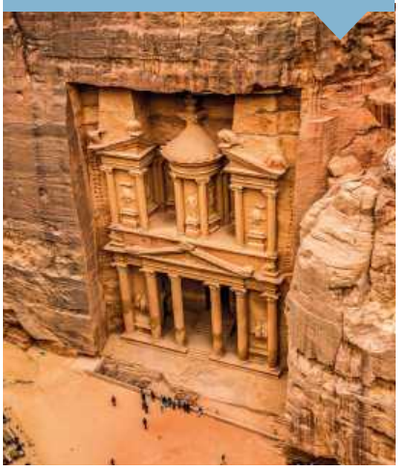
So whether you are considering an ocean or river cruise holiday for your next trip, you have an amazing choice, and the commitments being made by cruise companies mean that you, the customer, is always at the very heart of cruising.



CAPRICE Bourret

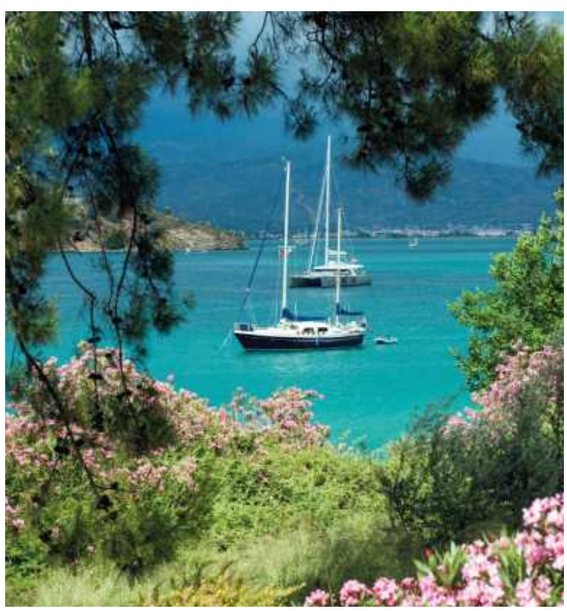
The entrepreneur, designer and former model shares her favourite destinations

I love Jordan. I went there to film part of my TV documentary *Caprice Travels*, and it is beautiful; the people were kind and the food was incredible.



I went on a cruise many years ago to do a photo shoot. I was working on the ship for five days so didn't get to relax much, but would love to go on a cruise again in the future with my family. A cruise is the perfect way to visit a number of countries in one trip. It's ideal for children, too.





One holiday I have brilliant memories of is when we chartered a 250-foot Turkish gulet and sailed with our family for two weeks around the coast of Turkey. It was amazing; the food was great and the cabins were better than a suite in a five-star hotel. It was just incredible.

Cruising is a great way to visit destinations because it gives you a different view every day. I love how the inside of the cabin stays the same but the outside changes.



The last holiday my family and I went on was to Ibiza and we spent an entire month there. My children love it and nothing makes me happier to see my children in the best mood 24/7. The food is amazing and the climate is perfect. I ate (a lot), sunbathed, meditated, swam twice a day and organised play dates for my kids. It was such a lovely holiday.

One place I would love to go to is Vietnam. Everyone I know that has been there raves about it once they're back.



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One holiday we chartered a Turkish gulet for two weeks

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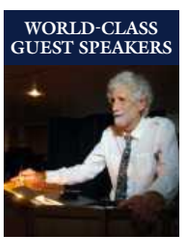
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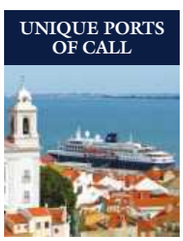
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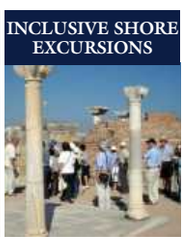
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